

Don't panic - you do NOT need everything on this list! Many items are only one of many options and some you might not need at all. (Example - extra heat if you keep your house toasty.)

NOTE: the last thing on the list is a FREE e-book on hedgies!

Vet bills can be the biggest expense. I recommend exotic pet insurance! It's only available through nationwide, is \$20 a month (less if you pay a year in advance) and can pay for itself in one visit! It makes it easier to ask "what is best for the hedgie" instead of "how much is this going to cost". Exotics have to be done over the phone, the number is on the website:

<https://www.petinsurance.com/>

CAGE:

The bigger, the better - absolute minimum size 18x28. BIG clear sterolite tubs (106 qt. or bigger) are cheap, lightweight & easy to clean and can also be joined by 4" PVC tubes for extra room. I use 24x36 and 24x48 wire top, litter box bottom style cages. You can use a big aquarium or small animal cage if already you have one, but they are expensive to buy. Used ones are sometimes posted on craigslist or found at garage sales for cheap. Don't use multi-level without making very shallow ramps with railings or walls to prevent falling. Bottom MUST be solid! No wire floors, this causes injuries. (Same for wheels!)

Inexpensive LARGE cage, canvas bottom (just needs to be placed on solid surface):

https://www.amazon.com/AmazonBasics-Canvas-Bottom-Cage-Black/dp/B07KB4C1QS/ref=sr_1_1_sspa?crd=356WIM8RPMU0J&dchild=1&keywords=guinea+pig+cages&qid=1632868297&srefix=guine%2Caps%2C380&sr=8-1-spons&psc=1&spLa=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUEyUFC3S1JUQjdJWVEyJmVuY3J5cHRIZElkPUEwMTYxNTM3SzUzOTMwMUITQVVLJmVuY3J5cHRIZEFkSWQ9QTAXNDIzODYzTEtTV01CNDE1SU9QJndpZGdldE5hbWU9c3BfYXRmJmFjdGlvbj1jbGlja1JlZGlyZWNOJmRvTm90TG9nQ2xpY2s9dHJ1ZQ==

WHEEL:

Bucket wheels - using 5 gallon bucket (or Sterolite cakesaver top), a rollerblade wheel & some PVC tubing, directions to DIY is in the HWS group. (If using cakesaver, frame sizes must be increased.) Or ~\$20-25 from most people who make them (including person below).

Carolina storm wheels \$25 are great for all but the largest hedgies:

<https://www.etsy.com/shop/CarolinaStorm?ref=hdr>

Email Larry to ask any questions dukencaabb@yahoo.com

You can use a 12" comfort wheel (~\$19 at petstores) but they ARE harder to clean and tend to squeak. 12" Silent Spinners (~\$30) are quiet, but also hard to clean and sometimes break apart at the split in the middle. Either will work...

Do NOT use a wire or metal mesh wheel! These break toes or legs. Metal mesh cuts into paw pads and the cuts get infected with poop. I've had several rescues with infected paw pads and/or twisted toes that broke and healed badly.

FOOD:

Kibble mix \$3.25/pound, plus actual shipping (best quality mix 10-12 adult cat foods):

Pat Storm <thisledew@yahoo.com>

Feed about 1 tablespoon per day, depending on size and activity level of the hedgie. This is great for healthy weight adults. Some hedgies may need higher or lower fat or a special food from the vet for health issues.

Use high quality kitten kibbles for underweight or young hedgehogs. (Fromm's Gold Kitten is a great high fat, high calorie, tiny kibbles - available at pet stores). Most hedgies do NOT need this - it's for sick or skinny hedgies, weanlings and such.

Fromm's Gold Mature is a great lower fat kibble for overweight hedgies.

A new, high quality, hedgehog specific brand! Really tiny kibble, comes in different formulas for high, medium, and low calorie, all based in soldier fly larva to give hedgies needed calcium:

<https://shop.hedgehogprecision.com/>

Unless you have a sick or injured hedgie, you will need to transition them SLOWLY to any new diet! Sudden changes upset their digestion. Start mixing in the new food with their old stuff, a little higher percentage every day until changed over (say over a week or two).

Hedgies are prone to tooth problems and may have difficulty eating hard kibble. They should be vet checked to make sure they don't have any infected teeth that need pulled. If they are missing teeth, you can get their regular kibble soggy so their diet is familiar. They can also be transitioned to canned cat food, or have the kibble mixed with canned to soften it.

Here's a wonderful article to compare dry and wet foods, and understand ingredients:

http://cats.about.com/cs/catfood/a/reading_labels.htm

Hedgies can eat people food such as tiny bites of cooked, unseasoned meats, veggies, and fresh fruit. They can also eat canned cat foods and human baby foods. Each hedgie has their own idea of what's tasty. Some favorites are watermelon, blueberries (can get messy!), banana, pear, peas, green beans... Some are more open to trying new things than others. ALL treats should be given in small amounts, like 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon to start - since food changes can upset their digestion.

BUGS:

Hedgehogs are insectivores - so most love mealworms, crickets, waxworms, etc. (There are a few that won't eat bugs, try a few times and different types before giving up.) You can get them live, dried, canned, roasted, etc. Canned get stinky and go bad quickly, even in the fridge. (These or excess canned food can be put into ice cube trays to freeze individual sized servings and thawed as needed.) Dried are better than nothing, but lack a lot of nutrients. Dried given in excessive amount can cause bowl blockage - so spread them out over the day and make sure they are drinking plenty of water! I prefer live mealworms, since crickets are loud & stinky. Waxworms are very high fat, so used only as treats or to help plump up a skinny hedgie or help a hedgie that just had a tooth pulled while they recover. Mealworms can be fattened up and "gut loaded" with nutrients. What you feed to the mealworms - you feed the hedgies. So I add carrots or apple slices for moisture and sprinkle in Fluker's high calcium cricket food. I have had a LOT fewer tooth problems since I started adding this:

https://smile.amazon.com/gp/product/B002DWTJBO/ref=oh_aui_detailpage_o05_s00?ie=UTF8&psc=1

Fat juicy mealworms, including shipping cost: 1,000 count \$18, each 1,000 is the same box is only \$7 more! (I get 10,000 at a time, but people with fewer hedgies don't need that many. They come shipped in newspaper, I put them in a plastic litterbox with wheat or rice bran (bedding), corn meal (to plump them up), the Flukers for nutrients (listed above) and veggies for moisture and more nutrients. West Georgia Mealworms, <https://www.facebook.com/Westgamealworms/> or email westgamealworms@comcast.net <westgamealworms@comcast.net>

Web articles on raising mealworms can help you keep them healthy and if you want, you can "farm" you own.

HEAT:

Hedgies are desert animals that like it warm. Mine don't come out to use their wheel unless it's at least 74 degrees in their cage. There are many types of heat sources. Ceramic heat emitters are common. I prefer this

small animal heating pad - waterproof, chewproof, never get too hot ~\$35 (if your room temp is below 72):

<https://www.petsmart.com/small-pet/health-and-grooming/grooming-supplies/kandh-pet-products-small-animal-heated-pad-14476.html>

(I place them under half the sleeping area, so they can move on or off as they please.)

Snugglesafes, microwavable heated pads (for cooler rooms or if a power failure is a possibility - they stay warm for 12 hours):

<http://www.healthypets.com/snugglesafe.html?OVRAW=snugglesafes&OVKEY=snuggles%20safe&OVMTTC=standard&OVADID=72442945511&OVKWID=462801666011&OVCAMPGID=15739789011&OVADGRPID=29049810399&OVNDID=ND2>

http://www.amazon.com/Snuggle-Safe-Heatpad/dp/B001QFNV2M/ref=sr_1_3?s=gateway&ie=UTF8&qid=1285736543&sr=8-3

You can also use hand or foot warmers sold for camping, just wrap in layers of fleece or stick inside a sock to avoid burning. Great to have for winter travel or power outs!

<https://www.homedepot.com/p/Hand-Warmers-HH210PK48/202564069?MERCH=REC--pipsem--202564069--202564069--N>

BEDDING:

You can use litter or fleece (cheap by the yard from discount or craft stores) for cage liners. Make sure fleece is non-woven or edges are tightly bound - so there's no loose threads to tangle around tiny feet! The fleece can be cut or folded to any size or shape, even small pieces for nesting in sleep area. Potty pads are also a great option! People pads are cheaper than puppy ones and come in a variety of sizes. Place under the wheel, as that's where most messes occur. I use these with fleece in the rest of the cage for most hedgies. (This avoids the dust/mess of litter.)

Carefresh shredded paper bedding (unscented, undyed) is soft and easy to change. Shredded aspen is the best wood fiber litter. Shaved wood risks splinters and ANY small particulate litter risks getting caught in penile sheaths.

Do NOT use cedar or pine (causes lung problems) or corn cob or any type of clumping litter, since they stick to wet areas. Hedgies have short legs and there have been corn cob caused fatal infections!

For hedgies that need to "wipe their feet" by digging after wheeling or who dig holes in potty pads, I use a square high back ferret litterbox (~\$12) or disposable microwave lasagna pan with Yesterday's News (shredded,

pelleted paper) under the wheel - fleece in the rest of the cage. (Aspen Supreme pellets are also popular, but I haven't been able to find them.) Most litter can stick in the quills and get tracked all over. Pelleted sawdust or newspaper reduces tracking. You can also use a cat litterbox by cutting a small "door" in one side - whatever fits best in your set-up. It's best to put the wheel IN the litterbox because most hedgies potty while running. Get used to the idea of a poopy wheel every morning. It's the sign of a happy, healthy hedgie!

HOUSE:

You need a hide - 12" igloo or such. Wooden house, hedgie "hat", cuddle bag or a pile of fleece to burrow in are also options. (Hats look like beanie caps and fit perfectly in a 12" igloo to make a snug, dark, warm den.) Make sure any fabric they have access to does NOT have any loose threads or holes to catch tiny feet. Also, check their legs & feet for hairs or threads wrapped around them before putting them back in their cages. Legs have been amputated from tangled hairs or threads!

Lots of different sizes and styles of cuddle bags, stuffed beds, soft tunnels and such on etsy and various pet sites.

Hedgie "hats" and/or cuddle bags \$9 each or 2/\$16 (and a one time free "care package" when adopting a rescue, which I include): Jennifer Plombon advohws@aol.com

ACCESSORIES:

Kitchen scale that shows weight in grams (weight changes are often the first sign of a medical problem) to weigh them at least once a week:

http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B007M0OKPM/ref=oh_details_o01_s00_i02?ie=UTF8&pvc=1

Small dishes for food & water: low sided ceramic is best as they are heavy and hard to tip over. Water bowls are best, as water bottles can break teeth. Food and sleeping areas should be on one side of the enclosure, wheel & play area on the other - this keeps the potty as far from food as possible.

12" runaround ball is optional, but great fun (~\$20-25):

<https://www.petco.com/shop/en/petcostore/product/kaytee-clear-run-about-115-exercise-ball-for-small-animals>

Fleece wheel liners for hedgies with mobility issues:

https://www.amazon.com/Hedgehogs-Hamsters-Animals-Comfort-Carolina/dp/B095S42HRQ/ref=sr_1_1?crid=2EZCVO9N5XIE5&keywords=comfort%2Bwheel%2B12%2Binch&qid=1638683381&sprefix=comfort%2Bwheel%2Caps%2C193&sr=8-1&th=1

Scarf loop with hidden cuddle pouch (has several options below this one ~\$25 and up):

https://www.etsy.com/listing/585278976/infinity-bonding-scarf-black-fleece?ref=shop_home_active_16

TOYS:

Cat balls with bells inside, small stuffed animals, ping pong balls, empty TP tubes, empty kleenex boxes or other small boxes (NO staples!), 4" PVC tubes & elbows, ferret tubes, piles of fleece, "dig box" with play sand or marbles... The list is creative and never ending!

Hedgehog welfare chat group - lots of experienced people to answer any questions as they come up:

hedgehog-welfare@googlegroups.com

Hedgehog Welfare Society also has a facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/98972897221/>

Hedgehog Welfare Society (care sheet, FAQs, vet list, rescue list, links to other hedgie info sites):

<http://hedgehogwelfare.org/>

***Free downloadable hedgie care book - the most current & best info:

<http://www.westcoasthedgehogs.com/files/hedgehogbook/index.html>

By Elaine Becker