

Hedgehog

Care Sheet



Hedgehogs are fascinating creatures that roam across Europe, Asia, and Africa, adapting remarkably well to diverse habitats. Their stunning spines offer them protection from predators, which is truly remarkable. To help your hedgehog thrive, focus on creating a comfy environment, providing a nutritious diet, encouraging natural behaviours, and keeping them safe. Though they may appear shy and cautious at first, with time and patience, these delightful little animals can blossom into lively companions, bringing joy and excitement into your life! A pet hedgehog should not be one that you've taken from the wild, as they are wild animals not used to humans and can carry diseases.

Get to know

Getting to know your hedgehog is a rewarding journey! It's essential for them to see you as their safe haven and protector. Approach them gently and at a steady pace to help build that trust. Offering treats while sitting nearby as they explore can create a wonderful bonding experience. Allow them a few days to acclimate to their new enclosure and surroundings before handling them. Take your time and continue offering treats to help them feel more comfortable with your presence. Remember, patience is key! Hedgehogs are naturally timid and may curl into a ball at first, but with love and time, they will start to enjoy being held and discovering new things. You'll be amazed by the bond you'll create!.

Enclosure

Hedgehogs are wonderful little creatures that thrive in a cozy, well-ventilated enclosure that keeps them comfortable and safe! A vivarium is an excellent choice for maintaining the perfect temperature, but you can also use wire or wooden cages. Just remember to choose a solid floor instead of wire mesh to protect their precious little feet! For adult hedgehogs, make sure their home is at least 3 feet by 2 feet, offering them plenty of room to explore. It's important to secure any doors or lids, as these curious critters love to climb and investigate! Lastly, placing their enclosure in an active area allows them to feel part of the family, where they can enjoy all the fun and excitement happening around them. Your hedgehog will surely appreciate the love and attention!

Temperature

Hedgehogs, while not cold-blooded, thrive best in warm environments, especially during chilly winter months. To ensure their comfort and health, it's vital to position their enclosure away from direct sunlight and drafts. Consider using a heating pad under one section or a ceramic heat emitter to provide warmth. Creating a temperature gradient, warmer in one area and cooler in another, can help your hedgehog regulate its body heat effectively. Don't forget to place a thermometer inside the enclosure to monitor the temperature! By taking these steps, you're providing a cozy and nurturing space for your little friend.

LIFESPAN

5-8 years in captivity

SIZE

24-35cm

TEMPERATURE

21 °C - 29 °C

HUMIDITY

Less than 40%

Environment

Substrate: Selecting the right bedding for your hedgehog is crucial for their health and well-being. opt for paper bedding, layering it about 3-4 inches deep—hedgehogs love to dig! Just remember to steer clear of wood shavings or clay/clumping litter, as these can pose health risks if ingested.

Décor: Enhancing your hedge's enclosure is essential for its well-being! Create a cosy nesting box where they can snuggle up for rest and feel safe. Don't forget to include a wheel for exercise and a variety of engaging toys, such as cardboard boxes, tubes, and balls. Adding some burrowing material will also spark their curiosity and keep them entertained.

Cleaning: It is essential to keep your enclosure clean. Promptly spot clean your enclosure whenever you notice waste. Additionally, all substrates must be replaced at least once a week, and the enclosure must be thoroughly cleaned using a safe disinfectant.

Diet

Feeding: A hedgehog's diet plays a vital role in ensuring its health and vitality! As insectivores, it's essential to include insects in their meals. For domesticated hedgehogs, a daily serving of 3-4 teaspoons of specially formulated hedgehog pellets is key. A few times a week, treat them to 'gut-loaded' insects—mealworms, crickets, waxworms, and earthworms are particular favourites! Additionally, don't forget to offer small portions of fresh vegetables and fruits every other day. This balanced diet will help your hedgehog thrive and feel great!

Water: Ensure your hedgehog has access to fresh water daily. You can provide either a shallow bowl or a water bottle for this purpose. A water bottle may be the better option, as it prevents substrate from contaminating the water. If any waste gets into the water bowl, be sure to change the water immediately.

Hedgehog's weight

Determining a hedgehog's weight can be seen by its signs. If your hedgehog struggles to curl up completely, has a rounded shape when uncurled, or displays visible fat pads under the arms or a drooping belly, it may be on the heavier side. It could benefit from a little extra movement. On the other hand, an underweight hedgehog will have a distinct V-shaped rear end and may appear somewhat "baggy" or sunken in certain areas. You might even notice the outline of their shoulders, hips, or spine, or feel their ribs more prominently, especially when held at an angle. A thriving hedgehog should have a delightful, rounded appearance with spines that playfully stick out.



Health & Welfare

A healthy hedgehog is such a delightful sight! They usually look wonderfully round and plump when curled up, sporting a shiny dark nose and bright, clear eyes. Their spines should be evenly distributed—nothing patchy or missing. You can often see them being lively and curious, especially at night! If you notice any changes in behaviour or appearance, don't hesitate to take them to a vet. It's a great way to ensure your adorable little friend stays happy and healthy!



Hedgehog



Hibernation

Hedgehogs are fascinating creatures that exhibit hibernation behaviours in the wild when temperatures drop significantly. This natural instinct serves as a survival mechanism, allowing them to conserve energy and endure harsh conditions. However, when kept as pets in captivity, hedgehogs do not need to hibernate. With a warm and comfortable environment tailored to their needs, they can maintain their health and stay active throughout the year. To ensure your hedgehog thrives, it's essential to maintain a stable ambient temperature. By keeping the correct temperature, your hedgehog can flourish, rather than retreating into hibernation.

Grooming

Hedgehogs do a fantastic job of grooming themselves! They might only need your assistance if they get a bit too dirty. Additionally, keeping an eye on their nails is extremely important, as they may require a slight trim from time to time.

Transport

When taking your animals with you, ensure their travel box is safe for them. Ensure there is enough room for your hedgehog to sit comfortably, but not so much that they can be knocked around. If they are new to travel, then even putting a cloth over them to create darkness can help calm them. Ensure it's well-ventilated, but also ensure there's no escape. Heat is vital; bring a battery heat pack or a hot water bottle to help provide heat so they stay comfortable.

Diseases and Concerns

Hedgehogs, like many loving pets, can face health challenges, but with a little knowledge, we can ensure they thrive! One common concern is mites. While most hedgehogs naturally carry them, some can experience infestations that lead to itching, skin crusting, and quill loss. Ear mites are another possibility that can cause discomfort. If you notice your hedgehog losing quills, it's important to investigate, as this could be due to various reasons, such as fungal infections or fleas.

Respiratory issues are also not uncommon, so we recommend using the right bedding and keeping a watchful eye on your little friend. If you notice any sneezing, coughing, or difficulty breathing, it's time to take action.

Educating ourselves about potential health issues is key to keeping our hedgehogs happy and healthy. If you decide to welcome one into your home, make sure to check on their well-being daily and consult a veterinarian at the first sign of trouble.