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# Hedgehog

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## CARE SHEET

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An introductory guide to caring for pet  
hedgehogs

[HedgehogAsPets.com](https://HedgehogAsPets.com)



A Free Publication

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### **Is a hedgehog the right pet for you?**

Hedgehogs are nocturnal animals, meaning they wake up in the late evening. Buying a hedgehog for small children is not recommended, since the hedgehog will wake up when your children are going to bed.

Another thing to consider is that hedgehogs are shy animals. It'll take some time for your new pet to get used to you. The time varies from one hedgehog to another. You need to be patient and gentle and be able to provide the hedgehog as much time as it needs to get used to you.

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CHAPTER

1

Hedgehog Requirements

# Hedgehog Requirements

## Before buying your hedgehog

Before buying your hedgehog, you should already have a cage ready, have a heating pad to keep your hedgehog warm and some hedgehog food.

Before you buy your hedgehog, you should have:

- A cage set up with:
  - Bedding (Aspen is the recommended bedding, NEVER use cedar or pine beddings. These types of bedding are toxic to hedgehogs.)
  - A Heating pad
  - An exercise wheel
  - Food and water bowl/bottle

# How Much Do Hedgehogs Cost?

Hedgehogs usually have an upkeep cost of about \$17 a month. The biggest expenses come when you are buying supplies for your hedgehog's arrival. Which can cost from \$94-\$219.

The hedgehog itself costs between \$75 and \$250.

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CHAPTER

2

Hedgehog Diet

# Hedgehog Diet

Hedgehogs are prone to obesity, so no matter what food you feed your hedgehog, be sure not to feed him/her too much. There are foods that hedgehogs should not eat. (See next pages for these foods). But first let's see what foods should be fed to your hedgehog.

- **Canned or dried cat food.** Chicken flavor is preferred. Never feed your hedgehog fish flavor.
- **Leftover meat.** Once again never fish.
- **Bugs.** Never snails or slugs.
- **Some good quality commercial hedgehog food.** Not all commercial foods are good for hedgehogs.
- **\*Fruits and vegetables.** Not all fruits and vegetables are good for your hedgehog. The following are the *safe* fruits and vegetables for hedgehogs
  - banana
  - carrot (cooked; too hard when raw, except possibly as thin salad-style shavings)
  - sweet potato
  - green beans
  - melon (watermelon tends to be popular, but keep in mind it's pretty much all water/sugar; generally best used in moderation)

squash  
pear  
peach/nectarine  
plum  
dandelion greens  
cherries  
cucumber (pretty much all water, little nutritional value)  
strawberries (and other berries, though it's recommended  
to remove the skin from blueberries)  
apple  
peppers (obviously not spicy ones; green/yellow/red bell  
peppers are good)  
asparagus  
zucchini  
spinach  
broccoli  
honeydew  
papaya  
radishes  
corn (small amounts)

\*Some say ALL fruits and vegetables are bad for hedgehogs. It is your choice whether or not to give your hedgehog fruits and vegetables.



# Foods Not to Feed Your Hedgehog

- Fish
- Raw meat or chicken
- The following fruits and vegetables:
  - Garlic
  - Grapes/Raisins
  - Onion
  - Citrus fruit and anything too acidic (This includes oranges/lemons/limes/grapefruit and also pomegranates, tomatoes)
  - dried fruit and vegetables (these can be hard to chew and digest, which may cause an upset stomach)
  - Avocados
  - Celery
- Anything seasoned
- Anything salty
- Junk food (a.k.a. chips, candy, chocolate, anything sugary)

- Nuts and seeds
- Large amounts of peanut butter
- dairy products (other than small amounts of cottage cheese)
- Fried meat
- Bread

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CHAPTER

3

Hedgehog Cage

# Hedgehog cages

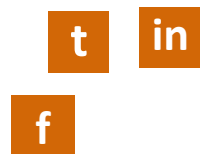
## Buying a cage

If you choose to buy a cage, buying a wired cage with a solid bottom is preferred. This prevents your hedgehog's feet from getting stuck in a wired caged floor. The pan bottom should be no less than 6" (15cm). With shallower pans, hedgehogs may climb the wired walls and cause them harm from either falling or getting their feet stuck. It also holds the bedding better.

If you decide to build your own hedgehog cage, you can visit:

<http://www.hedgehogaspets.com/make-your-own-diy-hedgehog-cage/>

for instructions and ideas.



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CHAPTER

4

Hedgehog Hygiene

# Cage and Hedgehog

Keep your hedgehog clean!

## **The cage:**

Your hedgehog's cage should be cleaned weekly. The wheel should be wiped with disinfectant wipes every week. The hedgehog food bowl should be rinsed. The bedding should be changed when it appears to be dirty.

## **The hedgehog:**

Your hedgehog should be bathed when it looks dirty or has dry skin or if your hedgehog has poopy boots (poop stuck to its feet). Even though bathing helps reduce dry skin, too much bathing may cause dry skin.

# Bathing Your Hedgehog

## How to:

Bathe your hedgehog in a sink. The water should be warm. Most pet shampoos and baby shampoos are safe for hedgehogs.

Wash your hedgehog by pouring a little bit of shampoo on your hand and rubbing it on your hedgehog. Use a soft toothbrush for feet and quills.

## Notes:

Avoid getting water in your hedgehog's ears, eyes, mouth and nose. Rinse all the soap off your hedgehog because soap residue can cause dry skin, then wrap your hedgehog up in a warm dry towel. Keep a hand in the towel with your hedgehog to make sure it isn't getting too warm. Your hedgehog should be completely dry after a bath, so it doesn't get cold. Never use a hairdryer on your hedgehog.

It is normal for your hedgehog to pee, poop or fidget in the bath until they are accustomed to the idea. It is easier to bathe a relaxed hedgehog, so wait a while to let your hedgehog get used to the water and relax its spines.

# Nail Trimming

## How to:

The best time to trim a hedgehog's nails are after a bath because they are softer and easier to trim. Use baby nail clippers when trimming a hedgehog's nails. If possible, have someone help you. One person holds the paw (careful not to pull the paw or twist it) and let the other person trim. If you don't have anyone who can help you, keep the hedgehog against your body as you cut.

## Notes:

Only trim a little of the nail at a time. The reason for this is that the blood supply (kwik) to the nail grows as the nail grows. Cut off a little and the kwik will recede.

The frequency of trimming differs from hedgehog to hedgehog.

Cutting too deep in the nail will cause bleeding, but not permanent damage.

Not trimming hedgehog's nails can lead to overgrown nails that curl into the hedgehog's foot causing damage to the foot, abnormal walking and infection.



# Potty Training

Some hedgehogs refuse to use the litter pan, while others start using it right away. Potty training your hedgehog saves time cleaning the cage and is worth the effort.

Hedgehog litter pans should be big enough for them to turn around in and should have a low front to climb in.

Ferret corner litter pans are a good option.

Place the pan away from food and water bowls and preferably in your hedgehog's favorite potty place.

## **Substrate:**

There are a lot of different opinions on what substrate to use. Which you choose is up to you.

Clumping clay kitty litter is not a good idea, because it gets stuck to the hedgehog's delicate areas.

Non-clumping clay kitty litter is a popular substrate, but many breeders do not recommend it.

Dust-free litter is also a popular litter option.

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Dust-free litter is also a popular litter option.

You should start potty training your hedgehog as soon as you get him/her. The earlier you start the better. It is a good idea to keep the wheel out of the cage for the first few days until it has a routine. You don't want it to use the wheel as a litter pan.

## **How to :**

Hedgehogs, like humans, have to go to the bathroom after waking up, so look for signs that show that your hedgehog is about to go and move him/her to the litter pan. After eating is another time to look for signs.

You should also place hedgehog pellets in the litter pan to tell them that is the right place.

## Notes On Potty Training:

No hedgehog is accurate all the time.

Young hedgehogs may '*wet the bed*' most hedgehogs outgrow this.

It is not normal for adult hedgehogs to wet the bed. If they do, watch for signs of urinary tract infection.

Many hedgehogs forget about the litter pan when they are on the wheel.

Some hedgehogs may start using the litter pan after months of taking no interest in it.

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Who ever said you  
can't buy happiness  
obviously never had  
a hedgehog.

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