



# All About the **Hedgehog**

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# The Hedgehog

## About the Hedgehog

The Hedgehog is a spiny, little mammal with 14 different species found in Europe, Africa, and Asia. With their outer covering, similar to that of a porcupine, they are not a pet that you normally snuggle with, yet are still very exotic and interesting pets. Some areas have made owning a Hedgehog illegal, so be sure to check your local laws before deciding to purchase one.

## Hedgehog Characteristics

Hedgehogs have round bodies, up to 13 inches in length, short little tails, and pointed snouts. Their backs and sides have a covering of quills, though they are not barbed like a porcupine's, and feel more like a coarse bristled brush. The underside is covered with coarse hair. Colorings are usually brown and yellow. When Hedgehogs are frightened or threatened, they will roll themselves into a tight ball with its spines pointing outward. They have very poor eyesight, yet can hear and smell very well. Nocturnal animals, Hedgehogs will prefer to sleep all day, and play at night. Some can be trained to switch this routine.

## Selecting Your Hedgehog

### A Few Words about Breeders

Hedgehogs will probably be located easiest through a breeder. With the different varieties and special needs, breeders are wonderful to work with, since they can often provide you with all the information you need when deciding whether to purchase one of these pets.

### A Few Words about Pet Stores

Locating a Hedgehog in a pet store can be rather difficult, especially depending on your location. As noted in the beginning, there are many areas that have made owning a Hedgehog illegal. To date, these locations are:

New York City  
California  
Arizona  
Hawaii  
Georgia  
Vermont  
Denver, Colorado  
Pennsylvania

If you are fortunate enough to find a Hedgehog in a pet store, be sure to obtain as much information as possible on the animal, as well as a health guarantee, should the Hedgehog become ill or expire before their time.



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## How to Choose your Hedgehog

Unlike most animals, Hedgehogs can be rather difficult to select. They sleep most of the hours when people would be out shopping for one, and they aren't always too friendly with strangers. It is best to start with a 6-8 week old, since they will be small and have more time to bond with you. If the Hedgehog is balling up, or their quills are spiked, it is better to avoid them for the time being. They are capable of biting, and just might do so if they do not wish to be bothered. Some other basics to look for are:

- Bright clear eyes
- Well rounded body
- Energetic and fairly interested
- Paws and toes look good; no difficulties walking

## Through The Years

### The Hedgehog Baby

Often referred to as hoglets, Hedgehog babies are absolutely adorable. Usually after 5-10 days, the mother Hedgehog will allow humans to handle her babies. If the mother is disturbed before this time, particularly right after the birth, she can become much stressed, and even eat the young. The babies will begin to explore the area outside the nest at 3 weeks, and will normally be weaned at 5-6 weeks. If the mother is trained to use a litter box, the babies will follow her lead and learn to use it as well.

### The Hedgehog Adult

Hedgehogs are very interesting creatures to watch. They are fairly laid back and not too wild. Hedgehogs have an unusual process of foaming at the mouth. This occurs when a new scent or object has been put in their cage. They will investigate the new item, and often chew on it, as if marking it now with their own scent. Hedgehogs can survive just fine on their own, and do not need the companionship of another Hedgehog.

### The Hedgehog Senior

The average lifespan of most Hedgehogs is around 7-10 years. They will tend to slow a bit as they get older, mainly wanting to nap a little more than usual. Hedgehogs will still enjoy time out of their cage and plenty of attention from their owners. Just as with humans, there are certain ailments that can affect Hedgehogs, and often affect their activity level.



You'll need these basics before your Hedgehog comes home. Click the items below to go to CheapPetStore.com to find the best prices for online pet supplies.

- [Cage](#)
- [Bedding](#)
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- [Food Dish](#)
- [Wheel](#)
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- [Carrier](#)
- [Treats](#)
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## Medical Considerations

Hedgehogs that have been neglected or fed poorly will have mites, dry, scaling skin, and often lose their quills. Other health issues, such as going blind, deafness, and even cancer, can affect Hedgehogs. As with most animals, regular visits to the vet can help with early prevention and medical treatments.

## Necessary Items

A 24"x24" cage is the minimum requirement for a Hedgehog. You will need some sort of floor covering for the bottom of the cage to prevent their little feet from becoming caught or injured. In addition to the cage, an exercise wheel, a place to hide and sleep (such as a box or other small shelter), food and water dishes, and toys are all necessary. If you plan to litter box train your Hedgehog, you will want to pick up those items as well. For their diet, Hedgehogs would normally eat insects and other bugs. You can purchase specialty food just for Hedgehogs online, and supplement their diet with other items such as mealworms, crickets, salmon, and tuna. Avoid feeding them nuts and dried fruits, since they can easily choke.



Can't miss gifts for the Hedgehog owner:

- [Guide To Owning An African Pygmy Hedgehog](#)

## Popular Products for your Hedgehog

[Hi-Bac Litter Pan](#)

[Bi-Odor Small Animal](#)

[Four Paws Flat Litter Scoop](#)

[Quick & Clean Instant Shampoo](#)

[Clip & Trim](#)

[Hay Manger](#)

[Timothy Hay-Kob](#)

[Earth Multi-Vitamin](#)

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