



Getting Started with Your New Hedgehog



CARE OVERVIEW SHEET

FEEDING YOUR NEW HEDGEHOG

My hedgehogs eat Purina One Tender Selects with Real Chicken Adult Formula Cat Food. I do not recommend feeding higher than a 38% protein content or 12% fat content.

6 wks – 16 weeks: Unlimited cat food with occasional treats

Over 16 weeks: 1-2 Tablespoons of cat food daily. I feed mine in the evening and most is eaten throughout the night. Treats can be fed a few times per week in small portions (e.g. two mealworms or a cricket or several bite sized pieces of fruits or veggies).

Treats to try (treats are not a necessary part of their diet and must be limited to ensure your hedgehog is eating a balanced diet):

- wet cat food
 - cooked chicken
 - scrambled or boiled egg
 - melons
 - strawberries
 - peas
 - cooked carrots
 - green beans
 - cooked sweet potato
 - cottage cheese
 - yogurt
 - baby foods
 - cat treats
 - ferret treats
 - and of course BUGS!
- (Wild bugs should be avoided due to pesticides and diseases)

Avoid sticky, hard or stringy foods as treats. Raisins/grapes should be avoided since they are mildly toxic to hedgehogs.

TEMPERATURE

Your hedgehog is most comfortable at temperatures between 75-80 degrees. I keep my hedgehog room at 78 degrees. Most homes are kept at 72 degrees. At this temperature your hedgehog will usually be safe from health risks associated with attempted hibernation, but it may affect his/her temperament.

A cooler hedgie is a grumpy hedgie! If your home is between 68-71 degrees, you will want to consider a Small Animal Heated Pad. You can place the pad under the cage in the corner that your hedgehog uses as its sleeping area. This will keep him/her more happy and comfortable.

If your home is drafty or temperatures fall below 68 degrees, you must provide an extra source of heat for your hedgehog or it will attempt hibernation and cause respiratory distress or death. Reptile heated pads are not acceptable since they do not provide an even heat and are too warm for hedgehogs.

Below is my recommended heated pad in case you are interested. Keep in mind that the floor temperature is 5 degrees cooler than "room temp." The pad is available from both my store and Amazon. Prices fluctuate between \$32 to \$38.

K & H Small Animal Heated Pad

Small Animal Heated Pad



LARGER VIEW

5/5 ★★★★★

[Read all 2 reviews](#)

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OVERVIEW

MORE INFORMATION

ARTICLES

* Electric heated pad is thermostatically controlled for even heat - won't get too hot or burn your pet

* Weatherproof pad keeps your small pet warm indoors or outdoors

* Cord is equipped with a steel chew guard to encourage safety

Heated pad keeps your small animal warm and cozy in any environment. Pad is safe and thermostatically controlled to maintain a temperature of 102°F so it will never get too hot or burn your pet. Ideal for outside rabbit hutches during colder months. Hard plastic, weatherproof construction is ideal for use indoors or outdoors. Extra long cord extends 5-1/2' with an 18" steel chew guard. Easy to clean - simply wipe down with a damp cloth. For ferrets, rabbits, hedgehogs, and guinea pigs. 9" x 12" x 1/2" thick, 25 watts. UL Listed.



Please click on "[More Information](#)" for important safeguards, use, and cleaning instructions.

HOUSING /BEDDING

You may have already purchased a cage. There are a few things that I've learned over the years that may help you and your hedgehog live more comfortably.

- 1. Do not purchase a rat cage as a hedgehog home.**
The bars on these cages are too close together and since hedgehogs can not grasp the bar their leg falls through and can become stuck and break. I received calls from two buyers after this happened to their hedgehog.
- 2. Do not use a cage with a second level.** Not only is it dangerous since hedgehogs have very poor vision and are likely to fall, but the second level will become difficult to clean and the less work the better to enjoy your pet.
- 3. A cage must be at least 18"x30" or 24"x24."** If your cage is smaller, there will not be enough space for your hedgehog to exercise properly and you will also need to clean more often. Your hedgehog will be unhappy and will try to escape. Most of the hedgehogs I've taken in as rescues were in small cages. This makes for unhappy hedgehogs and unhappy owners.
- 4. Aquariums are a poor choice for housing.** This is not only due to the fact that ventilation is poor (because you can buy a 50-100 gallon aquarium and leave the hood off and that allows plenty of space and adequate ventilation), but cleaning is difficult since you can not dump the bedding out. I recommend a plastic bin over an aquarium since they can be dumped out and thoroughly cleaned quickly and easily (not to mention they are much cheaper!).

- 5. Be very cautious if you decide to try Carefresh bedding.** Hedgehogs tend to eat it and it causes impactions and emergency trips to the vet. I recommend Kiln-dried Pine or Aspen Shavings.
- 6. Avoid purchasing bedding from pet stores.** (If at all possible) Bedding should be purchased from a store that does not sell animals. Animals often carry mites and the mites get into the bedding sold at those pet stores. If you want to avoid mites, buy your bedding from The Tractor Supply Company (pictured below) or Southern States or Walmart, etc. Usually, you will even save money.



LOOSE STOOLS

When hedgehogs are in periods of stress, they do have runny poop. Stress can include: change of diet, heavy quilling periods and transitioning to their new home.

These are just a few of the things that I've learned in my years of owning hedgehogs. More can also be found on my web site and my care video. Always feel free to contact me if you have a question/concern about your pet hedgehog.

I'll be more than happy to help!

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