

# Hedgehog

## African Pygmy Hedgehog



**Approximate life span:** 4-6 years

**Estimated adult size:** 350-450 grams

**Difficulty Level:** Advanced



The most common pet hedgehog is the African Pygmy hedgehog. They are nocturnal mammals, resembling the porcupine. Hedgehogs are covered in spines – stiff, hollow hairs that act as a defense when the hedgehog rolls into a ball with the spines poking outward.

### HOUSING REQUIREMENTS

Hedgehogs are solitary and should be housed alone. They need a minimum of 5-6 square feet. The enclosure should be solid, well-ventilated, and covered in soft paper or fleece bedding. Wire and plastic bottoms should be avoided, since hedgehogs' feet can develop calluses or be injured. In some climates, supplemental heat may be needed as cool temperatures lead to hibernation, which is undesirable and potentially dangerous in domestic species. A hide box should be provided for visual security. Hedgehogs also need access to a large wheel at all times. Lack of exercise can lead to obesity and other health complications.

### DIETARY NEEDS

**Base:** Hedgehogs are insectivores, and should be fed a pellet formulated specifically for their dietary needs. They should not be fed cat food, as this does not contain the nutrients they get from an insect-based diet.

**Treats:** Hedgies can be offered mealworms and crickets. They can also be fed some fresh vegetables and fruits in limited amounts, including bananas, apples, berries, and melons.

### RECOMMENDED VETERINARY CARE

- Annual exams
- Spay where available
- Common illnesses: Parasites, tumors, dental disease, pyometra, Wobbly Hedgehog Syndrome