

AFRICAN PYGMY HEDGEHOG CARE

African Pygmy hedgehogs (*Atelerix albiventris*) originate from central Africa, where they live a solitary life, mainly sleeping during the day and coming out to forage at night. They can make entertaining interactive pets if handled from a young age, and can live between 3-6 years if looked after correctly.

HOUSING

- Hedgehogs should be housed in a large glass or plastic tank with good ventilation, and a deep layer of bedding.
- Temperatures should be maintained between 24-30°C for these tropical animals, and the cage should be placed out of direct sunlight to avoid extremes of temperature.
- Suitable substrates include shredded paper or wood shavings (not sawdust or wood chips).
- Within the cage, nest boxes, branches and a wheel for exercise should be provided.
- Supervised exercise within a confined area in the house is encouraged, but it is important to prevent access to anything that could be chewed, eaten or destroyed.
- Hedgehogs may be litter trained, but are generally very messy animals and the enclosure will need frequent cleaning to help prevent disease.

COMPANIONS

- Hedgehogs are not social animals, and should be kept alone to prevent fighting

WHAT TO FEED

- Hedgehogs are naturally omnivorous, eating a large variety of insects in the wild, as well as occasional slugs, snails and small vertebrates.
- It is therefore recommended in captivity for their diet to be made up of a mix of insects or a balanced commercial hedgehog pellet.
- Additional vitamin and mineral supplementation should be applied to any insects given
- Obesity is a common problem in captive hedgehogs, so it is important to limit food amounts, feeding only at night, and removing any uneaten food in the early morning
- Water should always be freely available either in a drinking bottle or shallow bowl.

ANNUAL HEALTH CHECKS

We recommend annual health checks every year for pet hedgehogs as medical problems are more easily treated if detected at an early stage – **you can register for automatic reminders**

INSURANCE

We highly recommend that you take out a pet insurance policy. For a monthly fee your pet can receive the best treatment at an affordable cost. There is normally an excess to pay for each condition then after that costs are covered up to a set limit. Once you have the policy, please provide us with a copy of your insurance details. There are a lot of different companies and policies available and we suggest you contact a number of them for information- we have a leaflet advising what to look out for. Our advice is to choose a policy which provides cover for chronic illness for the life of your pet. If this policy is too much for you then the best cover you can afford will provide piece of mind in an accident or emergency.