



African Pygmy Hedgehog Diet and Care Recommendations

GENERAL INFORMATION

The **African pygmy hedgehog (*Atelerix albiventris*)** is found in scattered local populations from Senegal in western Africa to southern Somalia and Tanzania. It can be found in semiarid forests, deserts, and dry savannas.

Hedgehogs occasionally perform a ritual called anointing. When the animal comes across a new scent, it will lick and bite the source and then form a scented froth in its mouth and paste it on its spines with its tongue. It is not known what the specific purpose of this ritual is, but some experts believe anointing camouflages the hedgehog with the new scent of the area and provides a possible poison or source of infection to any predator that gets poked by their spines.

African pygmy hedgehogs are insectivores. They are nocturnal and can be found foraging for worms, snails, and arthropods. In captivity, African pygmy hedgehogs can live 3-5 years. They reach sexual maturity at 2 months.

Life expectancy: 3-5 years
Sexual maturity: less than 2 months

DIET

Insectivore Diet: Give one teaspoon of high-quality insectivore diet. We recommend Mazuri Insectivore Diet.

Insects: Give 4 small mealworms or 1 large mealworm daily. Some hedgehogs will also eat waxworms or silkworms.

Fruits & Vegetables: Occasional. They enjoy edamame, banana

Dairy: Do not feed any dairy products! Hedgehogs are cannot break down lactose. Although most hedgehogs will readily consume cheese, milk, and yogurt, consumption of these products can cause illness.

ENVIRONMENT

Hedgehogs love to burrow, nest, and hide.

Cage: Single level cage with plastic bottom or large glass aquarium. Do not use cages with wire bottoms, as hedgehogs can get their feet caught between the rungs.

Substrate: Use paper-based bedding, such as Carefresh or Yesterday's News. Don't use cedar or pine shavings. The oils in shavings can cause skin and respiratory irritation, and can also cause changes in liver function. Alder shavings are okay but not recommended.

Moisture: Provide a water bottle or dish of water at all times, and change the water daily.

Furniture: Provide boxes for nesting and hiding. Many hedgehogs will use a rodent wheel. Use plastic wheels, as hedgehogs can get their feet caught between the rungs of wire wheels. A pan or

shallow tub filled with warm water can be provided for wading and swimming.

MEDICAL CARE

Exams: Bring hedgehogs in once a year for an annual health check.

Common Illnesses:

Quill Mites: species?

Obesity: Caused by improper diet (i.e. cat food). Condition is easily reversed by feeding Hedgehog-specific diet or by limiting food intake.

Dental-Gingivitis, periodontitis

Foreign body (foot/toe constriction): Usually caused by string or hair that becomes wrapped around the appendages. Symptoms include: swollen, red, or blackened appendages. Treatment usually involves anesthesia, wrapping the injured area, and administering an oral antibiotic.

Squamous cell carcinomas (jaws and dentition)