



African Pygmy Hedgehog Diet and Care Recommendations

GENERAL INFORMATION

The African pygmy hedgehog (*Atelerix albiventris*) is found in scattered populations from Senegal in western Africa to southern Somalia and Tanzania. It can be found in semiarid forests, deserts, and dry savannas. In captivity, African pygmy hedgehogs can live 3-5 years. They reach sexual maturity at 2 months.

BEHAVIOR

Hedgehogs are nocturnal insectivores. They love to burrow, nest, and hide. 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.

DIET

Insectivore Diet: Give one teaspoon of high-quality insectivore diet. We recommend Mazuri Insectivore Diet. Cat food does not meet the nutritional requirements of hedgehogs.

Insects: Insectivore Fare is a complete diet, and there is no need to supplement. However, you may provide 4 small mealworms or 1 large mealworm daily if desired. Silkworms are preferred over mealworms as they are lower in fat.

Treats: Fruits and vegetables can be offered occasionally as a treat.

ENVIRONMENT

Enclosure: Hedgehogs should be housed in a single level cage with a plastic bottom or a large glass aquarium. Do not use cages with wire bottoms, as hedgehogs can get their feet caught between the rungs. Make sure there is enough room in the cage for the hedgehog to dig and burrow.

Bedding: 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.

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

Furniture: Provide boxes for nesting and hiding. A pan or shallow tub filled with water can be provided for wading and swimming. Many hedgehogs will use a rodent wheel. Purchase a solid surface wheel to avoid injury to the feet.

MEDICAL CARE

An annual exam performed by a veterinarian is recommended for proper care. Your veterinarian can advise you if any additional testing is required.