

Residue On Hedgehog Causes Concern

A hedgehog owner notices a yellow residue on their pet.

By Jill Warnick

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Q: Yesterday, I got my hedgehog out of his cage and noticed yellowish goo stuck to his fur. It was somewhat hard and would not come off. I put him in the sink and gave him a bath. The goo still didn't come off. He is not acting odd, so I think it may just be vomit or urine on his fur. Also, I think it might be a cut because it is near where he scratches. Additionally, I need help litter training him. Could you give me some advice in that area?

A: Hedgehogs occasionally need a bath if they get dirty. I am not sure what the goo on your hedgehog is, but possibilities include fluid from a scratch, wet food, staining from bedding, vomit or hedgehog waste. Self anointing (i.e., when a hedgehog coats itself in saliva after eating a new food) can leave hard food residue, and also cause staining. When bathing your hedgehog, use warm water and baby shampoo. Keep him in a warm room until dry.

Hedgehogs are denning animals, which means they will not soil where they sleep. Litter training is not difficult, but keep the following in mind. Do not use cat litter (e.g., clumping and clay litters) in your hedgehog's litter box. Place whatever bedding you use in his enclosure in his litter box. Make sure that the litter box cannot be knocked over — hedgehogs like to root. Some people use litter boxes made for ferrets that attach to the corner of the cage for their hedgehog. See which corner your hedgehog chooses to do his business in, and place the litter box in that corner. It might help to put some soiled bedding in the litter box to get your hedgehog started in using his new litter box. Not all hedgehogs take to a litter box, but it's worth a try.