

## Hedgehog Loses Quills

### **What causes hedgehogs to lose quills?**

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**Q:** I recently noticed that my hedgehog is losing his quills. This is the first time that I've owned a hedgehog. I did a lot of research online before receiving him, but I'd like more information on quilling.

**A:** You don't mention the age of your new hedgehog. If your hedgehog is young, this can be a natural process — quills are shed to allow new quills to grow in. In most hedgehogs this process stops by about 12 weeks of age but some may even show this at 6 months of age. This will go away on its own since it is a natural process.

If your hedgehog is older, then it is likely a medical problem. The three most likely causes are bacterial skin infections, fungal skin infections or mite infestation of the skin and quills.

The bad news is that you'll need to visit your veterinarian to have your hedgehog diagnosed and treated. The good news is that it is relatively easy and quick to make a diagnosis between those three disease conditions, and it can be rather simple to treat these conditions.

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