

Hedgehog Handling Tips

Avoid injury and learn to correctly handle hedgehogs.

By Audrey Pavia

Handling hedgehogs can sometimes be tricky because of their sharp quills. It's important to handle them correctly to avoid getting accidentally poked.

While you learn to handle your hedgehog safely, you may want to wear gloves to avoid getting pricked. Gardening gloves can help protect your hands. You can also pick up your small pet with bare hands. If you get pricked with a quill, wash your hands to minimize irritation to your skin.

Talk to a hedgehog in a soft voice before you lift it up to let it know you mean no harm. Move your hand toward the hedgehog slowly and slide your fingers under its stomach. Lift slowly and place your other hand underneath it, cupping both hands to provide support. Place the hedgehog against your body and hold it there. (Don't press it against you too firmly or you'll get poked with quills.)

Before you handle a new hedgehog for the first time, make sure you allow it at least a week to get used to its new surroundings before you take it out of the cage. Spend time bonding with the hedgehog before you pick it up. If your new hedgehog rolls into a ball, makes a hissing or clicking noise or struggles to get away, it's nervous about being held. Put it in the cage and try again after it has calmed down.

If someone else wants to handle your hedgehog, make certain the person is comfortable with the idea of holding a small pet with sharp quills. Offer to let him or her wear gloves. Also ask the person to sit on the floor before you let him or her pick up or hold your hedgehog. You don't want your hedgehog to fall far if the person accidentally drops your small pet.