

*British Hedgehog  
Preservation Society*

**First Aid**



Part of the  
**Know your Hedgehog**

**series**

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[www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk](http://www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk)*

## FIRST AID

If a hedgehog is found in the daylight, then this is usually a sign that something is wrong. Hedgehogs are nocturnal and do not come out during the day to lay in the sun. Nest disturbance is common but many are more likely to be orphaned, injured, poisoned or cold and starving so your help is essential. Staggering and poor muscle co-ordination may mean an internal injury but it could also mean hypothermia (if this is the case, the animal will be so cold that he/she will be unable to eat or drink or curl up and is therefore on a downward spiral so WARMTH IS VITAL). Even if there are no obvious signs of injury the following guidelines should be followed:

1. Ensure the hedgehog is kept warm, by placing it in a **HIGH SIDED BOX** lined well with newspaper, Place the hedgehog on a **HOT WATER BOTTLE** that has been wrapped in a towel and cover with a further towel. Leave enough room for the hedgehog to move off if it gets too hot.
2. NB Electrically heat pads for pets are ideal but not always available. Check for fly eggs (they look like thick clumps of pollen) or the already developed maggots in the ears, mouth, anus, armpits and fur. If present try to remove them all very carefully - useful aids are a **MAGNIFYING GLASS, TWEEZERS, COTTON BUDS AND A FINE PAINT BRUSH**. Aromatherapy oils like oil of clove leaf or tea tree may also help.
3. NEVER use cat or dog flea spray on hedgehogs - **JOHNSONS RID-MITE** or **JOHNSONS HEAD TO TAIL FLEA POWDER** (from pet shops) is better if fleas are present.
4. Bathe open wounds with a weak salt solution and seek help as soon as possible. If there is a problem with the eyes, bathe them in warm water and again seek advice.
5. Offer the hedgehog a drink of **WATER OR LECTADE** - NEVER cow s milk as this can cause enteritis, (Lectade is a re-hydrating solution which can be obtained from a Vet).
6. If injured, coughs or wheezes or does not respond to First Aid treatment take the hedgehog to a Vet or seek help from a hedgehog carer. If it is not injured and appears to respond to your treatment, then offer a small amount of cat/dog food or a little cooked chicken. Continue with **LECTADE** to drink as this will replace vital salts and minerals and can even be given via a dropper or a syringe if the hedgehog is very weak- but only once the hedgehog has warmed up.
7. Keep the box, covered with an old net curtain to protect the patient from flies, dirt etc. in a warm dark quiet place to aid recovery and reduce stress.

## TIPS TO REMOVE PARASITES

White/Grey shiny nodules on the skin or between the fur are probably ticks. Paint them with **COOKING** or **OLIVE OIL** or **TEA TREE OIL** and eventually the parasites will lose their grip and fall off. Do not just pull them as you might leave the head and mouth parts embedded in the hedgehog's flesh which may then turn septic.



## SUMMER ORPHANS

If a hedgehog nest, with mother and young, is accidentally disturbed, do not handle the young or she may abandon or even kill them. Replace the nesting material and just observe to ensure mother returns to her young. A high pitched, bird-like piping sound coming from a nest could mean that something has happened to mum and the young hoglets are in distress. The abandoned orphans should be kept warm and protected from flies and fed via a syringe with a feed mix of  $\frac{2}{3}$  goats milk and  $\frac{1}{3}$  goats colostrum at approximately 2-4 hourly intervals. Stimulation of the bladder to encourage them to urinate after each feed is essential. For further information see the BHPS leaflet Caring for Hoglets.



## AUTUMN JUVENILES

Small underweight late born hedgehogs will either need extra feeding outside or may need to be taken indoors and looked after during the winter months. Any hedgehog weighing under 600gms ( $\frac{1}{4}$ lb) at around late October/November will not survive hibernation without some help. If taken indoors a warm box and regular food and water is essential. They may also need worming - see BHPS leaflets The Basic Facts or Caring for Hoglets. These hedgehogs can then be released back to the wild in the Spring, see BHPS leaflet Into the Wild.



## BHPS HELPLINE

If you are unable to look after the hedgehog yourself then take him/her to your nearest hedgehog carer or animal sanctuary. Ring the BHPS on 01584 890801 to obtain the name and number. This number can also be used if you need further advice.



## ITEMS NEEDED WHEN LOOKING AFTER HEDGEHOGS

Small plastic bowl	For use as a bath
Pair of tweezers	Fine pointed if possible, for removal of maggot and flies eggs
Small sharp scissors	For cutting spines
Cotton buds	Ideal for wounds, applying cream, disinfectant etc.
Kitchen roll	
Cotton wool	
Disposable plastic gloves	Hygiene is vital
Scales	Weight checking is important
Artist s paint brush	For applying oil on ticks etc.
Hot water bottles	Vital for providing heat to hypothermic hedgehogs
Old clean towels	To use as bedding for hoglets
Newspapers	For lining hutches or bedding for adult hedgehogs
Syringes or Droppers	For feeding hoglets
Tin cat or dog food/	White meat flavours such as chicken, turkey or rabbit
Dried hedgehog food	Spikes Dinner or cat or small dog biscuits added to the meat will help keep teeth clean
Small pack of Lectade	Rehydration fluid essential for sickly hedgehogs in shock
Multivitamins	SA37 Intervet vitamin powder or Abidec vitamin drops
Washing up liquid	2% solution good for cleaning off oil, paints etc.
Salt	Diluted 1 teaspoon in 1 pint warm water, used for cleaning wounds
Milton or Sterilising tablets	To keep hoglets feeding equipment infection free
Panacur Granules	Obtained from your Vet - for worming hedgehogs - follow Vet s instructions
Cooking Oil	Apply to ticks with paint brush and ticks will drop off
Arnica	Homeopathic shock remedy, powerful internal antiseptic
Bach s Rescue remedy	Good for calming down stressed out hedgehogs
Heat Pads	Available from Spikes World Ltd. Tel: 01522 696 467
Feeding Plates	Shallow, heavy plates for adults, jar lids for hoglets

*For further information please send a s.a.e. to:-*

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