

*British Hedgehog  
Preservation Society*

**First Aid**



**Part of the**

**Know your Hedgehog**

**series**

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# 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. Ensure bottle stays warm, if allowed to go cold it will do more harm than good.
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 SMALL ANIMAL INSECTICIDAL 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. Ticks should be removed carefully with a tick remover - if in doubt seek help from a vet or hedgehog rehabilitator. 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 and contact a rehabilitator.



## 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 (1 $\frac{1}{4}$ lb) at around late October/November may not survive hibernation without help. If taken indoors a warm box and regular food and water is essential. They may also need worming - contact BHPS for up to date worming suggestions. 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

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|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 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  |
| 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                                       |
| 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                                  |
| Tick remover                  |   |

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