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# Hedgehogs



The hedgehog is a small, nocturnal mammal with a spiny coat and short legs. It lives in many different habitats, farmlands, gardens and parks. A female is called a sow, and the male is called a boar.



## Special Features

Hedgehogs are different to all of the other mammals in the UK because they have approximately 5,000 spines on their back. They use their spines as their main form of defence by rolling in to a ball so that their spines cross and point in different directions, protecting their back and skin. If you get poked by a spine, it can be very painful. Hedgehogs can swim, climb almost vertical walls, and run at speeds of up to two metres per second.

## Hedgehogs at Night-Time

Hedgehogs come out mostly at night-time. Their eyes are adapted for night vision but they don't have very good eyesight and mainly see large objects in cream or brown. They rely upon their senses of smell and hearing.

## What Does the Hedgehog Look Like?

Hedgehogs grow to around 25cm from nose to tail, and have a bulky body weighing around 1kg. Their tails are between 2 and 3cm long.

## Why do Hedgehogs Hibernate?

Hedgehogs hibernate during the coldest months between November and March, when their food supply is low. Hibernating animals usually go to a den, a burrow, or a hollow log for protection and shelter. During hibernation, the animal's body temperature drops, and its rate of breathing slows down. If it is warm enough and they can find enough food, some hedgehogs don't hibernate at all.

# Questions about...

# Hedgehogs



Answer the questions below in full sentences.

1. What type of animal is a hedgehog?

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2. Where does a hedgehog live?

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3. Which colours do hedgehogs mainly see in?

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4. Which senses do they rely upon?

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5. Describe what a hedgehog looks like.

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6. Do you think a hedgehog is clever? Explain your answer.

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7. Why do hedgehogs hibernate?

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7. What happens to their body during hibernation?

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