

Name _____



How Does a Hedgehog Reproduce?

Hedgehogs have unique mating behaviors and caring habits for their young. During mating season, which occurs in spring and early summer, male hedgehogs search for females by following their scent. When a male finds a female, he performs a courtship dance, circling her and making soft grunting sounds. If the female is interested, she allows the male to approach carefully.

Once mating occurs, the gestation period for hedgehogs lasts about 35 days. After this time, the female gives birth to a litter of 3 to 6 baby hedgehogs, called hoglets. The hoglets are born blind and with soft, short spines. Their eyes open after about two weeks, and their spines harden as they grow.

The mother hedgehog takes care of her young for the first few weeks, providing milk and protection. She nurses them until they are ready to eat solid food, around four weeks old. The hoglets begin exploring their surroundings under their mother's watchful eye before becoming fully independent at about six weeks old.

Hedgehogs do not live in family groups. Once the hoglets are weaned, they leave their mother and live alone. This solitary behavior helps them avoid competition for food and space in their natural habitats.