



LET'S TALK ABOUT  
**SYMPTOMS**  
THAT NEED A  
**VET VISIT**

AN APH CARE GUIDE

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By Happy Quills

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[WWW.HAPPYQUILLSRESCUEANDREHOMING.CO.UK](http://WWW.HAPPYQUILLSRESCUEANDREHOMING.CO.UK)

Due to the cost of vet visits, we always recommend you to take out insurance for your pets. Exotic Direct is the most popular company to offer this type of insurance

## ExoticDirect

ExoticDirect are a specialist exotic pet insurance provider and our experience dates back to 1996. We're the leading provider of exotic pet insurance in the UK.

We insure parrots, lizards, snakes and tortoises and even prickly pets like Pygmy Hedgehogs.

Our small mammal insurance can cover ferrets, guinea pigs, and rabbits to name but a few. And we can also cover larger animals like micropigs and even llamas!

Our insurance is designed to cover unexpected vet bills so that you can focus on getting the right treatment for your pet when it's ill. We can also cover your pet for death and theft, depending on your pet type.

ExoticDirect is trusted by over 11,500 exotic pet owners who have a policy and we've had over 150 5-star Feefo reviews in the past year.

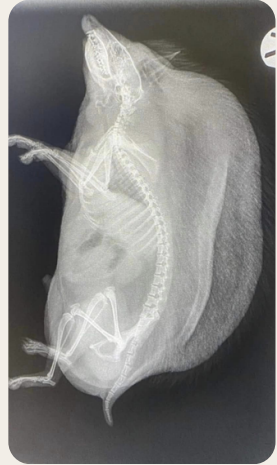
We're also proud winners of the Feefo Platinum Trust Service award 2022.

Responsible pet ownership is important to us, so we regularly publish pet care articles offering pet advice. We work with pet experts to give you access to their knowledge and experience.

ExoticDirect's policies are underwritten by Allianz Insurance plc.

If you need to make a claim, you can download a claim form [here](#).

You can contact ExoticDirect at [enquiries@exoticdirect.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@exoticdirect.co.uk).



# DENTAL ISSUES

## Symptoms of dental disease:

- Excess foamy saliva that smells
- Tartar build up
- Crusty tooth stains
- Gum inflammation
- Recession of gum line
- Poor appetite
- Pawing/rubbing at mouth
- Nasal discharge
- Wobbly teeth
- Coughing
- Bald patch on face with inflammation

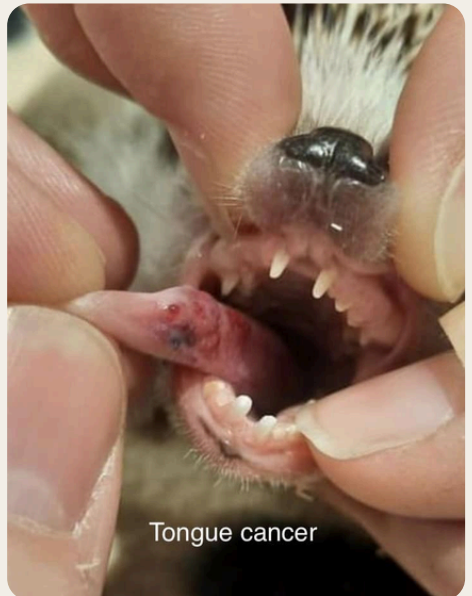


## What can be done to prevent dental disease?

The first thing is to make sure you are feeding your pet the correct diet. Kibble and bugs with hard exo skeletons help keep the tartar and plaque to a minimum. It has been proven that hogs that eat a majority of a wet diet, for example all wet cat food or all raw food, are more prone to dental disease.

You may want to consider cleaning your hogs teeth- yes this is a thing - see the album entitled "Miles Smiles" for more information

# Mouth cancer images



Sadly mouth cancer is extremely common in Pygmy hedgehogs. As of yet no one really knows why this is this case. Things to watch out for are bleeding gums, misshapened gums, internal and external lumps, black rotten gum line. Tongue cancer, although not as common, is also a thing. Some lumps can be fully or partially removed, extending the hogs life.

## **Urinary Tract Infections**

Urinary Tract Infections are quite common in Pygmy hedgehogs, these are usually cleared up with a course of antibiotics. Signs and symptoms of urinary tract in can include:

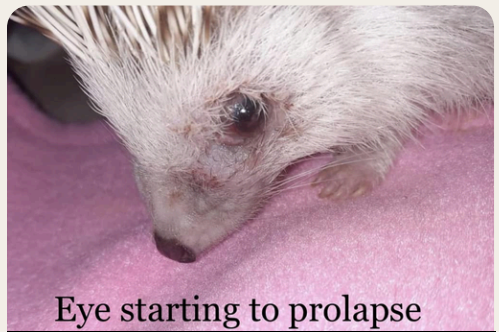
- Blood in urine
- Painful sounds the hog makes when urinating
- Thick discoloured urine
- Yellow thick discharge
- Constant urination
- Lack of appetite
- Lethargy

# Prolapsed Eyes

Prolapsed eyes are also common in APHs, this is due to the eyes protruding out, making it very easy to be caught on objects in their enclosure or even when scratching themselves.

Prolapsed eyes can be caused by a number of things such as an eye infection, tumours pushing eye out etc. So if you see your hogs eyes starting to bulge out slightly then an emergency trip is recommended. Eyes can pop out or rupture very quickly, so immediate action is needed. Sometimes the eye can be saved by antibiotic drops if caught quickly. Often a hog will scratch the eye out themselves if left untreated.

The good news is hogs cope remarkably well with the loss of one or both eyes since their eye sight is poor anyway. See our album called Pirate Hogs and Blind Hogs for tips on how to look after hogs without eyes.



# Other Prolapses

Females can have prolapsed uteruses. This requires a vet visit, if caught early the uterus can be positioned back inside the body, but this is not always successful. Females can also pass vaginal tumours/growths that grow quite large internally until they push them out when they start to get to a size that makes them strain. They can vary between aggressive malignancies and more benign/slower growing lumps. Usually no outward signs or warnings.

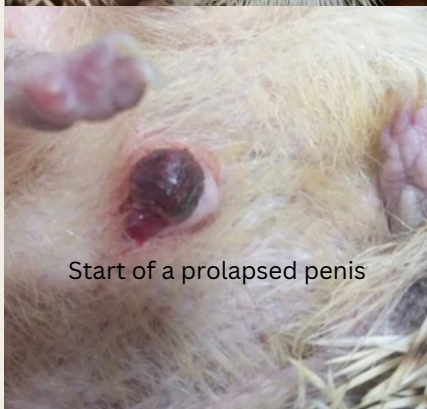
Due to males 'extra curricular activities' prolapsed penises can also be common. Sugar water is vet recommended and can help with swelling and to retract the penis (basically sugar dissolved in boiling water that has been cooled), Vaseline can also help. Unfortunately, once this happens it is likely to reoccur. It is important to see a vet so that the penis does not dry out and become necrotic.



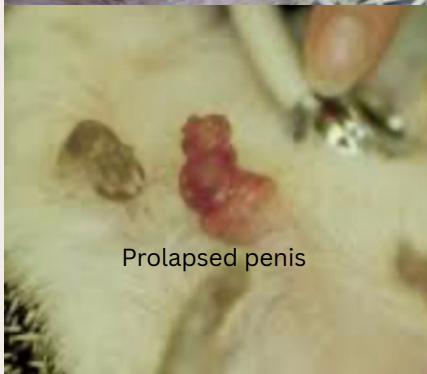
Prolapsed uterus - vet visit



Prolapsed growth



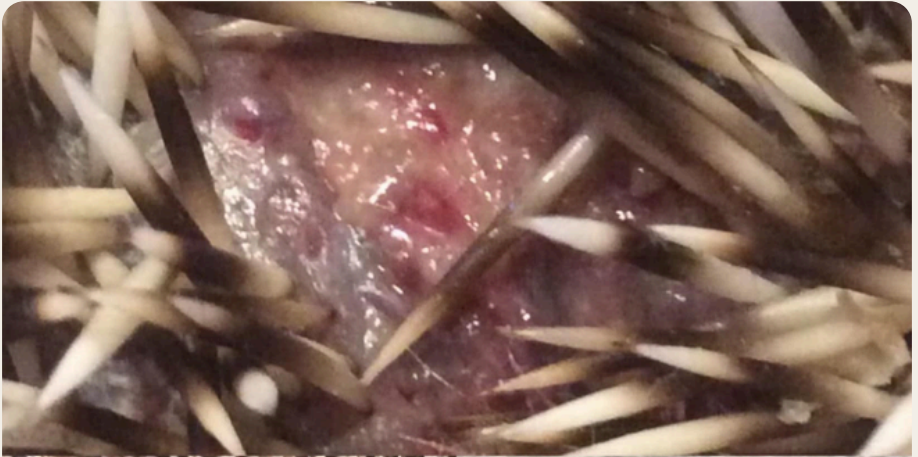
Start of a prolapsed penis



Prolapsed penis

# Bacterial Infections

Bacterial infections start small and spread rapidly, even in very clean conditions. Often caused by bacteria getting into small cuts or whilst quilling. In the below case the infection started out looking like a tiny red dot where a hog was struggling to quill. Bacteria got into this. The infection was not noticeable due to the quill coverage. The owner noticed a patch of quills were stuck down and were not moving with the other quills. Further investigation showed a mucous infection had spread across the skin. Despite going to the vets within two days and getting antibiotics, the hogs quills began falling out with clumps of skin. The antibiotics and Vetercyn wound care eventually stopped the infection, but the hog was left with a bald patch that never grew quills again. Due to rapid onset, bacterial infections can be deadly and require urgent vet treatment.



Infected quill  
that turned into  
bacterial  
infection





# Self Harming

Self harming is usually caused by stress or boredom, but hogs can also self harm if their skin is irritated by washing powder, mites etc. Always ensure that your hog has enough space to run round in (an enclosure minimum 4 x 2 ft), has a wheel to exercise and have plenty of toys etc to stimulate them (see album Ink's Entertainment for ideas)

Self harming is difficult to stop and needs to be caught early on before it becomes habit forming, so always check your hogs on a daily basis.

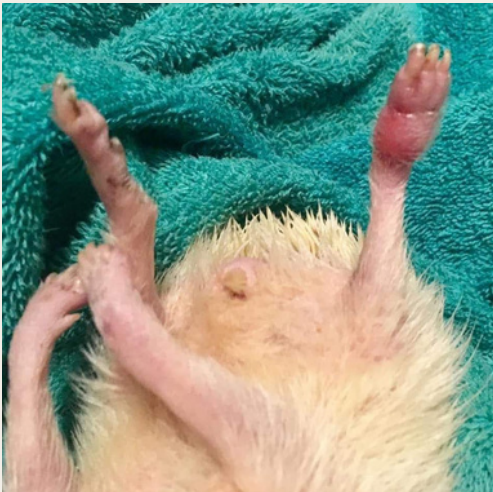


# Leg injuries and amputation

Hogs love playing in hair, unfortunately our hair does not like them. Before returning your hog to its enclosure please check that there are no hairs wrapped round their legs. Hair can cut into their skin, causing lack of blood circulation and swelling. If the hair is not removed quickly the foot can become black and necrotic.



Amputation is often required due to tumours or hair/fibres being caught around the leg. A three legged hedgehog is still remarkably agile and nimble.



Spinal injuries can cause hogs to lose strength in their back legs. It is very important that you check them daily for friction and urine burns if a vet thinks they could still have some quality of life. Some hogs do not like the lack of mobility and get extremely distressed, a decision needs to be made by a vet on a case by case basis.

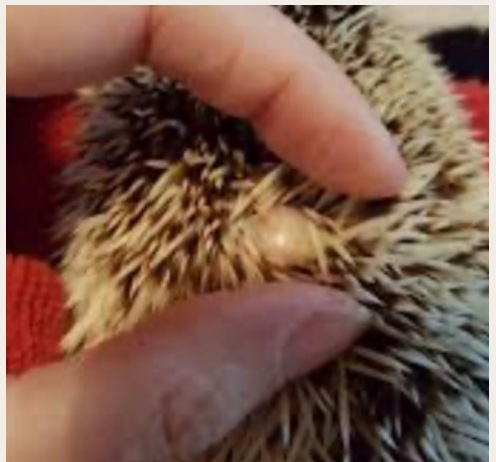


Other things that can cause weakness in legs are ear infections, calcium deficiencies, musculoskeletal issues and neurological conditions such as Wobbly Hedgehog Syndrome. See album called Wobbly Hedgehog Syndrome and Alternatives for more details.

# Cysts and ingrown quills

Some hedgehogs can be prone to small cysts or ingrown quills. Often these can be popped at home by using warm compresses to draw out the pus. Most hogs despise this and particularly difficult ingrown quills may need a vet to help extract them.

Reoccurring cysts might be a symptom of some under lying health issue, so although cysts can be manageable at home it is always best to get a professional opinion as cysts are very painful to the touch.



# The need for castration

At Happy Quills we are all about sharing knowledge about our spiky friends to help them get the best healthcare they can get. I thought I would share this recent vet experience with you all, as it may save the lives of future hogs, as it's not something that is widely known by vets or is on the internet.

We had a lady contacting us for advice as her male hog, 1 year old, had developed a lump near their tail. As well as the lump they had a decreased appetite, were eating more frequently but eating approx a third of kibble less and were severely constipated. They were having to do a warm bath daily to help with bowel movements. She went to the vet who did an X-ray and a scan. The X-ray clearly showed ping pong type lumps in the stomach, but the vet was pretty sure not cysts were pretty stumped thinking it could be a tumour. At this point the lady contacted us with the X-ray and scans asking if we had seen anything similar. One of our admin works at a vets and asked the vets in their practise their thoughts, they were 100% sure just poop and had a blockage of some sort. Then Maria Hughes thought she would throw out a previous experience with one her her own hogs Walt. When Walt was just under one he too became constipated, the vets could not diagnose him until they cut him open. Turns out his sexual organs were severely enlarged and were pushing the other organs out of place, hence causing constipation. Walt was castrated and hey presto returned to normal and lived a long and happy life. We passed this info on to the lady to discuss with her vet. Still not knowing what was wrong with her hog she agreed to exploratory surgery and lo and behold his sex glands were extremely swollen, pushing his organs into his chest cavity. They castrated him and gave him a hormone injection which helped bring his symptoms under control. The hog made a full recovery.

The vet conducting the surgery (different vet to the original X-rays and scans) is going to be using this hog's X-rays and scans to teach other vets about this condition. Apparently it is more common than originally thought, most vets saying it is a tumour and recommending the hogs to be put to sleep.

We are not sure if the age of one is a co-incidence or not, but if you have a male hog that presents with the same issues then it might be worthwhile sharing this info with your vet as it could save their lives.

