**Ouchmouse House bathing and nail trim care sheet:**

When it comes to bathing your hedgehog if you can avoid it then **DO!** Bathing your hedgehog is really stressful for them and also very drying on their skin.

Most hedgehogs will clean their own feet (it can take them a while to learn so if you can give them a chance). But a few will refuse to clean their own feet entirely and of course running on a poopy wheel they can get completely covered, ‘poop boots’. If your hedgehog gets poop boots you can run them a paddle bath, just an inch of plain warm water to walk about in and rinse their feet off.

On the off chance your hedgehog has managed to get filthy dirty on its quills and you can't get it off by wiping with a damp cloth then you can run them a shallow bath of warm water with either coconut oil or strained oats on to prevent skin drying, place your hedgehog in the water and trickle the water over their back with your hand, using a toothbrush you can then brush the quills free of dirt, dandruff and debris.

**Never make your hedgehog swim! They tire very quickly, you risk water in their ears which could lead to infection and you will likely traumatise your hedgehog! It might look cute on YouTube but it is wrong!**

Your hedgehog could need a bath for a few other health related reasons. The following are a few different bath remedies and what they treat:

* Quilling/dry itchy skin – Coconut oil
* Mite deterrent or treatment of fungal infections – Apple cider vinegar
* Sores such as sweat sores or over itching/chewing and infections – Bicarbonate of soda/Baking powder

Nail trimming…

You need to keep your hedgehogs nails short to prevent damage from scratching, curling nails and them getting trapped in loose threads of clothing or bedding. Setting a routine to do it every 2 weeks is a great way to stay on top of it.

You can see on a hedgehogs nails where you can and can't cut, the nail is clear and the quick is pink. If you cut the quick you will hurt your hedgehog and it will bleed **everywhere!**

There are many ways to cut a hedgehogs nails depending on how stubborn your hedgehog is, some of these are as follows:

* You can place your hedgehog on a flat surface with a bowl of mealies/chicken/eggs and gentle pick up the feet whilst your hedgehog is distracted.
* You can hold your hedgehog firmly against your body trapping the feet between your fingers.
* You can place your hedgehog in your lap on their back and wait for them to stick legs out and grab them gently but firmly.
* If all else fails and your hedgehog won't unball you may find it easier to stand them in a paddle bath and get at their legs from there.

If you are not confident you can take your hedgehog to the vets to have their nails done.

It may be a good idea if this is something that worries you to ask your breeder to demonstrate how they cut their hedgehogs nails.

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