

Hibernation

Hibernation is a way for animals to **adapt**. During the winter, it becomes harder for animals in the wild to find food and keep warm. In order to stay safe, some animals like badgers, bats, chipmunks, and groundhogs “sleep” until spring, when finding food will be easier and temperatures will not be dangerously cold. This process is called **hibernation**.

When animals hibernate, they don't actually sleep all winter – they go into a state where they don't eat or move for many months. How is hibernation possible? In the months before winter, an animal that hibernates will eat more than usual, so that it can store the fat and nutrients from the food. They also find a safe place to stay for the winter, and begin preparing a comfortable nest or bed to sleep in.

During hibernation, an animal's body temperature drops and its breathing and heart rate slow down. If their body temperature drops too low or their body runs out of nutrients, the animal will wake up, but during a successful hibernation, the animal will not be able to wake up until spring. Once the weather warms up again, the animal will know to come out of hibernation.

Despite what you may have heard, bears don't actually hibernate – they sleep for most of the winter, but their body temperature does not change very much, and they often wake up and move around.

Adapt: to change habits or behavior to suit a need.

1. Why do some animals need to hibernate?

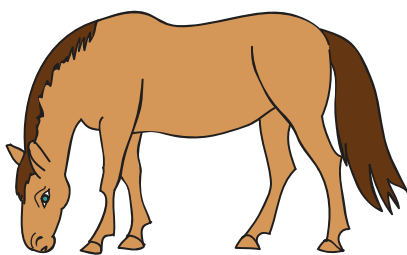
2. How does an animal prepare for hibernation?

3. Why don't bears truly hibernate?

4. Which of these animals does NOT hibernate?



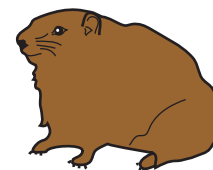
Badger



Horse



Chipmunk



Groundhog