



FERRET CARE TIPS

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LIFESPAN - Ferrets live an average of 8-10 years.

CAGES – Ferrets need a lot of room to explore and socialize. The minimum cage size is 15 square feet, but more is always better. They do best with multi-level cages with wrought iron bars. A few popular options are the Ferret Nation and Double Critter Nation habitats. Bar spacing should not exceed 1" for adult ferrets. Provide lots of ferret-safe toys, hammocks, and tunnels to keep your ferret happy when they're in their habitat. Ferrets are very intelligent and can be litterbox trained.

BEDDING - To avoid the development of infection or inflammation on their feet (bumblefoot), all surfaces in your ferret's habitat should be solid or covered in fleece (NO wire bottoms). Paper bedding or pellets are suitable options for ferrets, but this substrate should differ from what is used in their litterbox while litterbox training. If you use fleece, be sure to only wash with *scent and dye free* detergent.

FOOD – Ferrets are obligate carnivores, meaning they can only tolerate a meat-based diet. Provide a high-quality ferret kibble throughout the day. Their kibble should be high in protein (30-40%) and fat (15-20%), and low in carbohydrates and fiber (less than 3%). We recommend options like ZuPreem, Mazuri, Oxbow, and Marshall Premium Ferret Diet.

Treats can be a great way to bond with and train your ferret. Some safe options include cooked eggs, chicken, freeze-dried meat, and cat treats (yes, cat treats are safe in moderation!). Avoid fruits and vegetables as treats because of their high-fiber content.

VACCINES & HEALTH – Ferrets require a yearly visit to an exotic vet to ensure that they are healthy and thriving. They also require both rabies and distemper vaccines. There are a few health conditions and illnesses that ferrets are prone to. If you suspect that your pet is affected by any of these, please contact your exotic vet.

Adrenal Gland Disease - a very common disease that affects the adrenal glands. Symptoms include hair loss, excessive itchiness, anemia, aggression, prostatic/vulvar swelling in males/females.

Insulinoma - tumors affecting the insulin levels. These tumors can be cancerous (malignant) or non-cancerous (benign). Symptoms include pawing at the mouth, weakness/disorientation, weight loss, tremors, abnormal behavior, "stargazing" or prolonged staring.

Canine distemper virus (CDV) - ferrets are a member of the canine family and are susceptible to CDV. This is 100% preventable by getting your ferret vaccinated. CDV is a fatal virus that exhibits symptoms including loss of appetite, fever, nasal/ocular discharge, and rash on the chin, abdomen, or groin.

Human influenza - ferrets can contract (and spread) the influenza virus. Symptoms are similar to those exhibited in humans.

Heat stroke/illness - because they cannot sweat like humans, ferrets can overheat if not kept in an appropriate environment. This can occur above temperatures of 90 F. Symptoms can include lethargy, difficulty breathing, and open-mouth breathing. This is a life-threatening emergency.

FLOOR TIME – Ferrets are very intelligent and inquisitive animals and need lots of mental stimulation. They require at least 2 hours out of their cage in a ferret-proofed environment. Provide plenty of toys, tunnels, and activities to keep your ferret engaged and out of trouble (they can be very mischievous!). Be sure to provide access to their litterboxes while they roam and block off areas they can get stuck in. Keep health hazards like harmful chemicals, house plants, and electrical cords out of reach. A ferret-proof play pens are another great option to keep them safe.

SOCIAL NEEDS – Ferrets are very social creatures and do best in same-sex groups or pairs of 2-4 animals. Do not keep unaltered ferrets of the opposite sex together. Our adoption contracts states that our animals will not be bred.