

Ferret Care and Diseases

Lifespan and housing

Ferrets live on average 5 to 7 years.

The proper cage for a ferret will have multiple levels, and be at least 24" x 24" x 18".

They need a *minimum* of 2 hours per day spent outside the cage in a ferret proof exercise area! Ferrets will be less destructive if they get enough exercise outside the cage, and also if they have another ferret they are caged with to keep them occupied while they are in the cage.

Ferrets can be litter box trained. Use a pelleted or shredded bedding, such as shredded newspaper or Carefresh bedding. Do not use clumping cat litter!

Diet

Ferrets are carnivores, meaning they are meant to eat meat. They need to be fed a diet that is **high in fat and protein, and low in carbohydrates**.

A high quality ferret diet is best (such as Mazuri ferret food or Totally Ferret ferret food). **You should avoid feeding kitten or cat food**, as these tend to be too high in carbs and not high enough in protein.

A balanced raw carnivore diet may also be fed. There are many of these diets available as freeze dried or frozen diets. Archtype diet for ferrets by Wysong or Nature's Variety feline diets are examples.

Commercial packaged ferret treats should not be fed! They contain too many sweeteners and carbs.

Treats that can be fed include a piece of raw liver or heart, raw meat, or raw egg. Use treats sparingly!

Vaccinations

Ferrets need to be vaccinated for **canine distemper and Rabies**. Vaccination for distemper is every 3 weeks until 16 weeks of age, and then yearly. Vaccination for Rabies is done between 12-16 weeks of age, then the next year, then every 3 years.

Routine veterinary care

Ferrets up to 2 years of age: should be seen by a vet once a year for a physical exam and vaccines.

Ferrets over 2 years of age: should be seen by a vet twice a year for a physical exam, and possible bloodwork and x-rays.

Common diseases

Foreign bodies in the stomach or intestine

Adrenal disease

Insulinoma (a type of cancer)

Epizootic catarrhal enteritis (a cause of diarrhea)

Human influenza

Fatal anemia in female ferrets

Heartworm disease