

DIET

Ferrets metabolize their food very quickly. You must ensure they have constant supply of fresh food and water. Wherever possible, ferrets should be fed a good quality food that is specially formulated for them. An alternative would be a good quality kitten food that contains a high quantity of protein and fat and a low level of fibre. Please note, not all "ferret foods" have the proper nutrients for ferrets. If you are unsure what to feed your ferret, call your local ferret shelter.

HEALTH

The average life expectancy for ferrets is 8 years. Ferrets are generally healthy until the age of 4 or 5. A happy healthy ferret should be a bundle of joy that is hopping and bopping all over the place. Of course some ferrets are more calm than others, but is it important to note that most ferrets are "full of beans."

Ferrets can have a number of health issues that should be understood. Treatment for many of these problems is surgery, which is expensive (i.e. \$700-\$1200). For example, diagnosis and removal of an object that has obstructed the digestive tract can easily cost the ferret owner \$1,00.00. Make sure you know a good ferret knowledgeable vet before one of these serious problems occurs.



FERRETS AND OTHER PETS

All pets require constant supervision. Ferrets are very curious by nature and can play rough with each other. They might accidentally "nip" other pets too hard, which can cause the other pet to retaliate with enough force to harm the ferret. In addition, large birds can be dangerous to a ferret and rodents and rabbits are a natural prey for ferrets.

Ferrets need both rabies and distemper shots on an annual basis. As a ferret owner, it is your responsibility to provide the necessary vaccines for your pet.

FERRETS AND CHILDREN

Children who are not familiar with any pet should never be left unsupervised with a ferret. Ferrets can become very excited when they play. Poking fingers and objects will frighten them. If they feel threatened, they will naturally defend themselves.

Teach your children how to hold and play with a ferret. Limit play periods so they can get to know one another and learn from each other.

MORE INFORMATION

Contact the Ferret Rescue Society of Ottawa and Area at <http://www.ferretrescue.ca>



A QUICK GUIDE TO FERRETS



Ottawa Humane Society
www.ottawahumane.ca

Ferrets are extremely inquisitive, very intelligent and very playful animals that will enthrall you with their “weasel war dance”, their chattering (what ferret fanatics call “dooking”), and their personal characteristics.

Before adopting a ferret, consider the following:

- They are more work than a cat, but generally less work than a well exercised dog.
- They require 2-3 hours daily outside of their cage for some serious play time and exercise.
- They require their food, water and litter box to be changed on a daily basis.
- Their bedding needs to be changed at a minimum of once per week.
- Everyone in the household should understand exactly what is required of them to look after this mischievous bundle of fur.
- Ferrets can get into anything their heads fit through, so ferret proofing is always ongoing.

SETTING UP HOUSE

Essential Items

- Large Cage
- Rectangular litter boxes
- Food and water bowls
- Water bottle
- Pet Carrier
- Nail clippers
- Ferretone or Linatone
- Ferretlax laxative
- Ear cleaner
- Ferret Shampoo
- Ferret toys
- Tubes or tunnels
- Blankets

GENERAL CARE

Ferret’s ears should be cleaned on a bi-weekly basis. The easiest way to clean a ferret’s ears is to sit down, hold him by the scruff with one hand, and have his back legs held gently between your legs. Using a q-tip dipped in ear cleaning solution, GENTLY rub the inside of the ear to remove the wax build up.

Nails should be trimmed on a bi-weekly basis as well. If your ferret likes ferretone or linatone, simply put some on the ferret’s tummy, put the ferret on your lap (while the ferret is licking his tummy), take a paw, lightly squeeze the pads and trim away. ONLY trim the white part - do NOT clip below the quick or the ferret will bleed profusely, and it hurts!

Ferrets have a slight “musky” smell. This odour is distinct for two reasons: it is used to attract the opposite sex for mating purposes and it is also used as a defence. It is common belief that the ferret should be bathed weekly or monthly. THIS IS NOT TRUE. Ferrets should only be bathed 3 to 4 times a year – preferably during shedding seasons. Over bathing produces more oil in their skin and actually causes their odour to increase.

HOUSING

Domestic ferrets should live in a cage in your home (not in a garage or outside in a shed). They should never be exposed to the extreme elements of heat or cold. An appropriate cage should have at least 2 to 3 separate levels with plenty of room for the ferret to roam (a good size cage is about 4 feet high, three feet wide and three feet deep). A cage should also contain tubes / tunnels and appropriate toys for the ferret to play with, hammocks spaced throughout the cage and lots of blankets in the areas where the food and litter box are not.

TOYS

Ferrets have very strong teeth and jaws so their toys must be practically indestructible. Plastic bags (with the handles cut), paper bags, dryer hose, golf balls, stuffed animals and balls with bells in them are great toys for ferrets. The louder the noise (providing the ferret isn’t deaf), the more fun they are for the ferret. Avoid toys made from foam, rubber, sponge, or anything the ferret can easily chew off and swallow



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