



A Private Charity Since 1881

Ferret Care Sheet

Care sheets provide basic information only. We recommend purchasing a book about your new pet, and seeing a local veterinarian for a wellness exam after adoption.

Basic Information

- Average adult size: 15 inches long, head to end of tail
- Average life span: 8 years with proper care
- Ferrets can be kept in pairs or small groups if kept together from an early age or introduced properly.
- All ferrets have a natural musky odor. The odor is minimized when the ferret is spayed or neutered.
- Always wash your hands after handling your pet, or cleaning its dishes, cage, toys, etc.

Diet & Feeding

- Fresh food and water should always be available. Most ferrets are accustomed to drinking from a water bottle.
- Specialized food formulated for ferrets should make up their entire diet. Specialized ferret treats are available but should be limited.
- Clean, fresh, filtered, chlorine-free water, changed daily.
- Do **not** feed chocolate, caffeine, or alcohol as these can cause serious medical conditions. Avoid sugar and high fat treats. Ferrets are obligate carnivores and should not be fed fruits or vegetables.

Housing

- Ferrets acclimate well to average household temperatures, not above 80°F. Avoid extreme temperature changes. The habitat should be placed in an area that is away from drafts and direct sunlight.
 - The habitat should be large, wire, and have multiple levels. Be aware that ferrets are excellent escape artists.
- 1-2" of paper bedding, such as Carefresh, is recommended. Wood shavings should not be used.
- Clean and disinfect the habitat and non-porous toys regularly; remove wet spots daily and change bedding at least once a week or more often if necessary. Ferrets can be litter box trained and a litter box should be offered. Use compressed wood or paper pellets as litter (do not use clay cat litter).
- Ferrets are very intelligent and love to explore. Be sure to provide a variety of toys, hammocks, and hiding places to keep them busy. Ferrets also need daily supervised time outside of their cage to exercise.

Health & Grooming

- Ferrets should receive monthly baths with ferret shampoo and regular nail trims. Ferrets can also be brushed daily with a soft brush.
- Ferrets require annual rabies and distemper vaccines.

A healthy ferret should be active, alert, and sociable, eating and drinking often, with healthy fur and clear eyes. Healthy ferrets typically sleep up to 18 hours a day. A ferret that is inactive, losing weight, has diarrhea, hair loss, or distressed breathing may be sick. If you notice these signs, discharge from the eyes or nose, or other problems, please see your veterinarian right away.