

Caring for your FERRET

Total ferret wellbeing

From daily enrichment and balanced nutrition to physical exercise and loads of love, we focus on every aspect of small pet care to help you create a full, healthy and joyful life for the ferret you love. In this care guide, we'll cover the basics of what you need to keep your ferret happy and healthy.



Fortified food

As an obligate carnivore, your ferret is unable to properly digest fruits, vegetables, and grains. As a result, all ferrets require a specialized high-protein, high-fat diet comprised predominately of animal-based ingredients.

Your ferret's food should make up about 80% of his overall diet and should always be available.

OFFER a high protein, high fat diet which provides 100% of your ferret's daily recommended vitamins and minerals.

AVOID ingredients like corn, peas, and potatoes which are high in starch and not a part of the natural diet of ferrets.



Supplemental foods

Supplemental nutrition should consist of high quality, animal-based proteins and fats and can come in the form of homemade morsels such as boiled or cooked muscle meats (such as chicken), cooked eggs, and dehydrated organ meats. When properly handled and stored, raw or dehydrated diets, raw meat, and whole prey can also provide supplemental enrichment for ferrets.

AVOID fruits, vegetables, cereals, and grains. As obligate carnivores, ferrets are unable to properly digest these foods.



Did you know that ferrets are natural predators? In the wild, ferrets largely consume small mammals and will opportunistically also eat fish, birds, reptiles, and sometimes even insects. To help with their hunting in the wild, ferrets have great senses of hearing and smell, a strong bite, and short, powerful legs.

Treats

Appropriate treats can play a valuable role in your ferret's nutrition. Just be sure to choose options that have been formulated with your carnivore's health in mind.

- Store-bought treats should focus on providing animal-based proteins and fats while limiting carbohydrates. Artificial colors, flavors, and preservatives are never necessary.
- Freeze-dried animal proteins provide a good treat option if they are palatable to your animal.
- You can also work with your veterinarian to acquire Oxbow's Critical Care Carnivore to offer as a treat and supplemental protein and fat in this format.

AVOID treats made with plant-based ingredients like fruits and vegetables.

LEARN MORE ABOUT FERRETS' UNIQUE NUTRITIONAL NEEDS:



Housing your ferret

Ferrets sleep most of the day and night, so they tend to do quite well in a species-appropriate enclosure while their pet parents are at work or in bed. It is important to make sure the habitat you choose meets the following minimum requirements:

- As large as possible with multiple levels
- Narrow bars to allow for plenty of ventilation while lessening the risk of escape or entrapment
- Plenty of tunnels and bedding to burrow through
- Multiple hides, hammocks, and fleece pockets
- Multiple water sources (no-chew/glass water bottles are strongly encouraged)

FIND A QUALIFIED EXOTICS VETERINARIAN NEAR YOU:



Your ferret's health

You should visit a qualified exotics veterinarian at least once a year for checkups on your pet's diet, behavior, and health.

- Be prepared for your pet's visits by making a list of any questions or concerns you may have ahead of time and bringing examples of your pet's nutrition, habitat, and husbandry-related items.
- Ask your veterinarian to recommend an appropriate age to have your pet spayed or neutered; this will increase the chances of a longer, healthier life for your pet.
- Some ferret health problems are preventable with proper diet and care.

LEARN MORE ABOUT FERRET HEALTH ISSUES:



REASONS TO CONTACT YOUR VET:

- Loose, soft, or lack of stool
- Small, dry, or infrequent stools
- Blood in the urine
- Sneezing or trouble breathing
- Sores on the feet
- Observed difficulty with chewing food
- Bald patches in the fur
- Abnormal eating or drinking
- Hunching in a corner or lack of activity (lethargy)

Enriching your pet's world

All ferrets are wired to engage in a set of core instinctual behaviors each day. These behaviors include playing, hiding, and exploring. Intentionally encouraging these behaviors in healthy ways is called enrichment.

- Support all three behaviors in a variety of ways each day to support your ferret's mental and physical health.
- Providing daily enrichment is a fun, interactive way to build your bond with your ferret.
- Offer a variety of engagement accessories, places for rest and relaxation, and exercise items daily.
- Oxbow's Enriched Life accessories are designed to help make enrichment fun, easy, and safe!

GET MORE ENRICHMENT INSPIRATION FOR YOUR PET:



Supplies for your ferret

- Fortified food:** Specialized high protein, high fat kibble (such as Essentials Ferret)
- Species-appropriate **supplemental foods and treats**
- Two sources of water**, and **no-tip food bowl**
- Multiple **Enriched Life accessories**
- Large **play yard** for safe exercise outside the habitat
- Large multi level habitat** with solid, non-slip flooring
- Multiple **hiding spaces**
- Litter box** with **Oxbow's Eco-straw litter**
- Bedding material**, such as **Oxbow's Pure Comfort**. Avoid aromatic cedar and pine shavings that may contain resin and could irritate your pet's lungs and skin.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT FERRET CARE AND BEHAVIOR, VISIT WWW.OXBOWANIMALHEALTH.COM

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