

## Common Breed



### **Domestic Ferret:**

Life span: 7 - 9 years

Weight: 2 - 5 pounds

Ferrets are energetic, curious, interested in their surroundings, and often actively solicit play with people. Ferrets have a repertoire of behaviors both endearing and difficult for some owners. Play for a ferret will often involve hide-and-seek games. They also have a strong nesting instinct and will repeatedly carry small objects or food to secluded locations. Ferrets will seemingly form attachments to certain objects and will repeatedly seek out and "steal" the same object and bring it to their hiding place.

Ferrets spend 14 to 18 hours a day sleeping and they usually sleep in six hour sections. Though ferrets sleep more than most other domesticated animals, they are very active when awake and will seek to be released from their cage to get exercise and satisfy their abundant curiosity daily.

Ferrets can use a litter box with training, but they are not always completely litter box trainable. Their instinct is to spread their waste in order to scent mark a wider foraging territory for themselves; thus, multiple litter boxes may be necessary, and all litter areas should be changed frequently.

## Supply list

Here's a list of the necessities you'll need to take home to help your new ferret stay healthy and happy. Please ask one of our pet experts to help you choose these items.

### **Home**

- ❖ Appropriate size and type of cage
- ❖ Recycled paper litter pellets
- ❖ Corner litter box
- ❖ Litter scoop
- ❖ Ferret bed
- ❖ Water bottle
- ❖ Food bowl

### **Food**

- ❖ Advanced nutrition ferret diet
- ❖ Specially formulated ferret treats

### **Grooming**

- ❖ Ferret shampoo
- ❖ Ferret nail clippers
- ❖ Styptic powder
- ❖ Ferretone

### **Toys**

- ❖ Specially-designed ferret toys
- ❖ Specially-designed ferret chews

### **Extras**

- ❖ Ferret harness and leash
- ❖ Ferret carrier
- ❖ Cage cleaner and disinfectant  
(Read and follow label instructions)

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## **FERRETS**



**Scientific name:** *Mustela furo*

**For Ages:** 16 & up, with adult supervision

**Pet lifespan:** 7 - 9 years

**Pet Size:** Males 3 to 5 pounds, Females 2 to 3 pounds

## Traits & Behavior

**Fun-loving:** Ferrets are known for their kitten-like personalities and are curious, active and love to play. They have no fear of people or other pets, so be sure to monitor their interaction carefully.

**Intelligent:** They are very smart and can be trained to perform basic tasks, including using a litter box and walking on a leash.

**Predatory:** Ferrets have a predatory nature and must be kept away from pet birds and small pets such as hamsters and rabbits.

**Nipping:** Ferrets have a natural tendency to nip, which can be overcome with gentle training.

**Burrowers:** Ferret's long bodies are designed to get into tight spaces. Remember, if their head can fit, their body will follow. So it's important to "ferret-proof" your home.

## Things to remember

**Lifting & Handling:** Handle your ferret gently. Gently clasp the ferret behind and below their shoulders and loosely support the hips with your other hand, then bring them close to your body for added support.

**Special needs:** Ferrets need a regular grooming routine including occasional baths, as well as regular nail trims. They also require annual veterinary exams and vaccinations. As they age, ferrets will require more frequent veterinary care.

**Musky odor:** Ferrets have oil glands in their skin, in addition to large anal glands. Even if ferrets have their anal scent glands removed, they will still have a mild musky odor.

**Safety & Cleanliness:** Please remember that all pets may bite or scratch, and may transmit a disease to humans. Keep your pet's home clean and wash your hands before and after handling your pet or cleaning their home.

Infants, young children, pregnant women, people with compromised immune systems, and the infirm or elderly are at a greater risk of infections and should use caution when in contact with the pet or its habitat.

Consult your doctor for more information.

## Nutrition

**Staple diet:** Choose a high-protein, high-fat, low-carb, advanced nutrition diet, made especially for ferrets. Due to their high metabolism, ferrets need food available at all times.

**Treats:** Ferrets enjoy treats, but offer them sparingly; only 1 - 2 per day. Be sure the treats are high in protein and formulated especially for ferrets.

**Foods to avoid:** Ferrets should never eat any sweet or sugary foods, foods high in carbs, chocolate, cheese, yogurt, ice cream, milk and coffee. Ferrets are highly lactose intolerant, and caffeine can kill them.

**Toys:** Provide your ferret with a selection of specially designed ferret toys. Remove and replace toys when you notice signs of excess chewing or wear.

**Water:** Change and fill your ferret's water bottle with clean water every day.

\*Remember that fresh food items require their own dish and should be removed from the habitat after four hours to avoid spoilage.



## Tip

The most common reason a ferret won't use a litter pan is that they may be a little bashful and if they feel they are being watched, they'll go hide somewhere to do it.

## Habitat

**Housing:** Your ferret needs a multi-level, well-ventilated home with a textured plastic or all-wire floor. There should be plenty of room for all cage accessories, and for them to move around freely.

**Litter:** Only use recycled paper litter pellets (do not use clay or clumping cat litter) and clean it daily or more often if needed. Provide a corner litter pan and fill it with about 3cm of litter.

**Sleeping:** Create a sleeping area near the top of the home with a specially designed ferret bed or a pile of clean towels. Wash bed or towels regularly.

**Cage placement:** Place the habitat in a cool, low humidity area, out of direct sunlight.

## Health

### Signs of a healthy ferret:

- ❖ Clear eyes and ears
- ❖ Clean, full, shiny coat
- ❖ Eats and drinks normally
- ❖ Clean nose; normal, even breathing
- ❖ Well-formed droppings with no diarrhea

### Things to watch for:

- ❖ Loss of appetite
- ❖ Dull coat; bare patches in the fur
- ❖ Increased or decreased water consumption
- ❖ Blood in stool or urine
- ❖ Lethargic behavior
- ❖ Diarrhea for more than 24 hours
- ❖ Sneezing; discharge from the eyes, nose or mouth