

## shopping list for needed supplies

- appropriately sized habitat
- book about ferrets
- high quality ferret food
- ferret treats
- bedding
- food bowl/water bottle
- hideaway place
- toys
- hammock
- litter pan/litter
- indoor playpen
- harness and leash
- soft brush and nail clippers
- shampoo

## sources

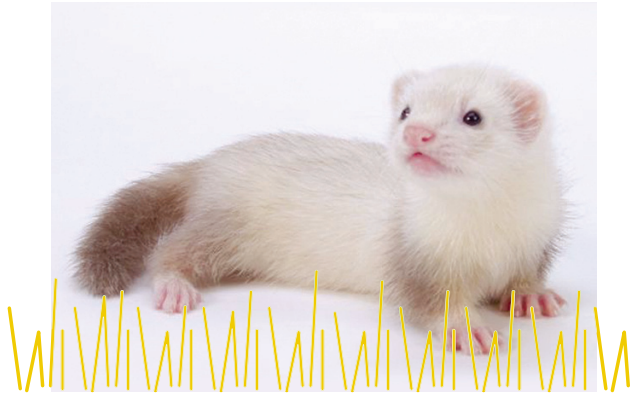
Ask an associate about Petco's selection of books on Ferrets and the variety of Petco Brand products available for the care and happiness of your new pet. All Petco Brand products carry a 100% money-back guarantee.

Because all Ferrets are potential carriers of infectious diseases, such as cold & flu - including H1N1 - always wash your hands before and after handling your Ferret and/or habitat contents to help prevent the potential spread of diseases.

Pregnant women, children under the age of 5 and people with weakened immune systems should contact their physician before purchasing and/or caring for a Ferret and should consider not having a Ferret as a pet. Go to the Centers for Disease Control at [cdc.gov/healthypets/](http://cdc.gov/healthypets/) for more information about Ferrets and disease. Go to [petco.com/caresheet](http://petco.com/caresheet) to download other helpful Care Sheets.

# Ferret

*mustela putorius furo*



## Care Sheet

**Ferrets are affectionate, intelligent small animals that love to play and explore. They are known for their happy, inquisitive nature and humorous behavior.**

### Ferret facts:

- average adult size: 15 inches long
- average life span: up to 8 years with proper care
- diet: carnivore

*All Petco ferrets have been spayed or neutered and scent glands removed by a licensed veterinarian.*

**Note:** The information in this Care Sheet is not a substitute for veterinary care. If you need additional information, please refer to the sources on the following page or contact your veterinarian as appropriate.

## diet

A well-balanced Ferret diet consists of:

- High-quality Ferret food; Ferrets are obligate carnivores.
- Clean, fresh, filtered, chlorine-free water, changed daily.
- Do **not** feed chocolate, caffeine or alcohol as these can cause serious medical conditions. Avoid sugar, food and treats high in carbohydrates and high fat treats.

## feeding

Things to remember when feeding your Ferret:

- Fresh food and water should always be available.
- Limited amounts of Ferret treats.
- All food given to Ferrets 16 weeks or younger should be moistened for easy consumption.
- Remember, treats should not exceed 10% of total food.

## housing

- Ferrets acclimate well to average household temperatures, not to exceed 80°F; be cautious of extreme temperature changes. The habitat should never be in direct sunlight or in a drafty area.
- Ferrets need a large, multi-tiered wire-sided habitat with good ventilation, a secure door, and a solid floor; openings between the wires should be small enough so the habitat is escape-proof; habitat should also include a hammock, hiding place, litter box and toys. It is best to provide the largest habitat possible.
- 1-2 inches of bedding should be placed in the habitat; proper bedding includes high quality paper bedding, crumpled paper bedding, or hardwood shavings. Cedar-based products are not recommended.
- Ferrets are very social and may be kept in pairs or multiples if raised together or introduced

correctly. Different types of small animals should **not** be housed together.

## normal behavior

- Intelligent, playful, and mischievous; love to collect and hide household items; love to dig, so be conscious of house plants. Never allow out of habitat unsupervised.
- Some Ferrets may communicate by making entertaining noises or by using body language.
- Nipping is a natural behavior to get attention or show defensiveness when awakened.
- Can be litter box trained.

## habitat maintenance

- Clean the habitat and its contents at least once a week with mild soap and water, rinse and allow to dry completely before placing the Ferret back into the habitat.
- Scoop litter box daily; change bedding at least once a week, or more often as necessary.

## grooming & hygiene

- Monthly baths are recommended, or more often as necessary, using Ferret shampoo; Ferrets have a natural musky odor that bathing will not remove; outer ears should be cleaned using a cotton ball and ear-cleaning solution.
- Nails should be cut every two to three weeks; fur may be brushed daily with a soft brush; Ferrets shed their coat twice a year.

## signs of a healthy animal

- Active and social when awake.
- Sleeps up to 18 hours per day.
- Shiny coat and clear eyes.
- Eats and drinks regularly

**Distemper vaccinations are required at 9, 12 and 16 weeks of age; rabies vaccinations are required between 13-16 weeks of age from an exotic animal veterinarian. After that time, Ferrets require annual vaccinations.**

## red flags

- weight loss
- abnormal hair loss
- diarrhea or dirty bottom
- distressed breathing
- lethargic
- eye or nasal discharge
- skin lesions

*If you notice any of these signs, please contact your exotic animal veterinarian.*

## common health issues

Health Issue	Symptoms or Causes	Suggested Action
Diarrhea	Loose stools caused by poor diet, stress, internal parasites, unclean housing, or infectious organisms.	Consult with an exotic animal veterinarian to determine cause and treatment.
Ear mites	Parasite that causes itching and brownish discharge in ears.	Consult an exotic animal veterinarian for treatment.
Heat stroke	Emergency condition that can occur if Ferret is left in a hot room. Symptoms include heavy panting, seizures, and loss of consciousness.	Can be fatal; contact an exotic animal veterinarian immediately.
Adrenal gland disorder	Loss of hair; cause unknown.	Consult with an exotic animal veterinarian.