


5. Ferrets need high quality dry cat or specific ferret food with a minimum 32-36% protein, 18% fat, and less than 3% fiber content. The main ingredients should be meat-based, not corn or rice. Any treat made specifically for kittens or ferrets is acceptable as a treat. Dairy products are discouraged as treats for ferrets and chocolate is very toxic to ferrets.
6. Like other baby animals, kits may nip. Many kits go through a teething process because adult canine teeth do not come in before 7 to 8 weeks; adult molars arrive a few weeks later. A firm "NO!" and removal to their cage will eventually get training accomplished in most ferrets.
7. Responsible adults should always be the primary caretakers of ferrets and should provide close supervision for children playing with ferrets. Ferrets are generally not recommended for children under the age of 8, though there are exceptions, depending on the temperament of the child and of the ferret.
8. A ferret needs its nails clipped every 2 to 3 weeks and a bath (with ferret or kitten shampoo) as necessary, typically no more than twice a month so as not to dry out their skin. Ears should be treated for ear mites and fleas eliminated as needed.
9. A ferret will normally live from 6 to 9 years, so be prepared for a long term commitment.
10. Ferrets enjoy human contact. We recommend giving a ferret at least 30 minutes a day of undivided attention. This includes cuddling, playing, hugging, kissing (yes), holding, etc., in addition to the time spent on health care (see # 8, above).
11. Never, ever let your ferret outdoors without a harness and lead. Outdoor cages are not recommended in areas of high heat (above 80° F), freezing temperatures, rabies or distemper outbreaks, or mosquito infestation.
12. A new ferret introduced into a group of ferrets needs to be quarantined for 7 to 10 days under aseptic conditions to minimize the risk of spreading illness or disease. Ferrets are extremely susceptible to human colds and the flu; care is needed to prevent the spread of such maladies from human to ferret and vice versa.
13. Shelters and rescues can be invaluable resources for information and assistance with ferrets including help in preparing your home before you adopt your first ferret.

Love them, and ferrets will respond in kind.



For additional information on caring for your ferret, please contact the organization in your area listed below:

Ethics Code For



Ferret Caretakers

PREAMBLE

- [1] Ferret caretakers are dedicated to the health and welfare of the domestic ferret and strive to educate the general public and ferret owners regarding the proper care and well being of the ferret.
- [2] Ferret caretakers are alert to opportunities to help protect the domestic ferret against anti-ferret legislation, unsound breeding practices, and any other practices that are deemed to lower the health or survivability of the animal.

ETHICAL GUIDELINES

The following are minimum standards of acceptable ferret care. By following these guidelines, you insure that your ferret will have the best chance of living a healthy, full life. If you come upon ferrets whose treatment falls significantly below these standards, please help educate their owners. If this does not resolve the problem, contact your local ferret rescue, SPCA, or Humane Society. If such a resource is not available, email Ferret Friends International.

Shelter:

Ferret caretakers must provide a well ventilated area sufficiently large to allow for separate eating, sleeping, and litter box areas that also allow for ferret movement. A minimum of 2 cubic feet per animal is recommended. An aquarium is *never* suitable housing for ferrets.

Ferrets that must be confined in cages need time out of the cage each day, in a supervised ferret-proofed environment, for a minimum of 1½ hours.

Dietary needs:

Ferret caretakers must provide fresh water every day as well as food appropriate to the ferret's requirement for a low fiber, high meat protein and fat diet.

Neutering:

Ferrets must be spayed/neutered when they come to full maturity, usually by the time they are six months old unless they will be used for responsible breeding purposes. Unspayed females are at risk of dying from aplastic anemia if not mated. Unneutered males demonstrate aggressive behavior and have a strong odor, both of which can make them problematic for human interaction. Any ferret with an unknown history or background (rescue) should be spayed or neutered.

Ongoing ferret maintenance:



Caretakers must be attentive to their ferrets' needs for periodic bathing, nail trimming, ear cleaning, and flea control. Ferrets need an annual veterinary check. These annual check ups typically include an eye, teeth, ear, and coat examination, listening to the heart and lungs, and a full body exam for growths, unusual lumps, and overall health. Starting at age 3 or 4 the vet check should also include a fasting blood glucose test and blood chemistry panel.

Companionship:

Caretakers must provide their ferrets with sufficient human, and if possible, other ferret contact to fulfill the ferret's need for sociability.

Vaccinations:

For baby ferrets (kits), canine distemper vaccinations are essential at 8 weeks, 11 weeks and 14 weeks. The first rabies vaccination is given at 3 months. For adult ferrets, yearly vaccinations for canine distemper and rabies should be given at least 2 weeks apart or at the same time for best immunological response.

These guidelines have been compiled by Ferret Friends International for use by friends of ferrets everywhere. For further information please email: Bay Ferret@aol.com

FURTHER GUIDELINES TO THE CARE OF FERRETS

The domestic ferret can make a wonderful pet, and is forever curious, loving, forgiving, playful and energetic. The following are typical minimum requirements for a ferret owner:

1. Ferret-proof the house, or at a minimum one room, where the ferret can exercise away from its cage. Block all holes larger than ½ inch in diameter. Modify or eliminate potentially lethal recliners or sofa beds and remove any potential household hazards from their space. Guard against ferrets escaping into the outdoors; domesticated ferrets cannot survive on their own outdoors.
2. Ferrets usually need to be kept away from pet birds, rodents, and/or reptiles. The ferrets may harm them or be injured by them.
3. In addition to a cage large enough for movement, ferrets need warm bed clothes for comfort and security, as well as ferret toys for amusement.
4. A ferret can be trained to use a litter box with cat litter or newspaper, and will usually use any corner of any room for elimination. Keep the litter box clean and newspapers changed. Ferret excrement generally has no odor, except on humid days.

