

CRITTERS: Ferrets



Ferrets are becoming more and more popular as pets. They are very active animals that require a high level of commitment. They often sleep 15-20 hours a day, but when they are awake, they need time out of their cage under constant supervision, especially around other animals and children. “Ferret proofing” your home is essential - they are descendants of the weasel after all!

DIET

Ferrets require a special diet as they are carnivores. Dry ferret food makes for an excellent choice as it is high in protein and fat, and low in fiber. Treats, when given in moderation, can provide for additional supplemental nutrition. Hard-boiled or scrambled eggs, pieces of cooked meat or dried liver treats will hit the spot. Remember, no sugar for your adorable new friend.

HABITAT

Create a den-like, escape-proof atmosphere. A multi-level wire cage with a secure latch and ramps, stairs, hammocks or perches works best. Line the bottom of the cage with tiles or a soft, washable material (avoid wood/cedar chips). Provide good ventilation in a cool, shaded area away from direct sunlight. Be sure to wash bedding and disinfect the cage regularly. Ferrets can be litterbox trained. Provide a small tray filled with pellet-type litter (no cat litter) affixed to the side of the cage away from food, water and the sleeping area.

HEALTH CARE

Ferrets can have a strong, musky odor. You can bathe them with a gentle shampoo, but not too often, as that could make their scent glands work overtime. Ferrets are prone to ear

mites. Clean their ears every few weeks with special cleanser from the pet store. They must be spayed or neutered, and can be descented at that time.

OUT OF CAGE TIME/TIME WITH HUMANS

Ferrets have limited vision, so speak softly to them before approaching. Pick your ferret up with two hands – one under his chest, the other under his hips – and never pick him up by the tail. Ferrets have sharp teeth and may bite when startled, excited or handled improperly. Avoid pointing your finger at them as they may see this as a threat or food.

LIFE SPAN

6 - 8 years

CHILDREN SHOULD NOT BE RELIED UPON FOR TOTAL CARE; ADULTS MUST MONITOR

MORE RESOURCES AT

hsppr.org/resources



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