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## Desexing

Ferrets are not prolific breeders like rabbits but nevertheless, if you are not careful, you may find yourself swamped with babies!

Desexing your Ferret is recommended. It ensures a calm temperament and reduces the likelihood of some serious diseases.

It is obvious to desex your male ferret to prevent him from wanting to mate with any females & calming his temperament.

Ferrets should be desexed from 6 months of age. It is extremely important for female ferrets to be desexed before this time as they are what is known as an 'induced ovulator,' meaning that they remain in heat for long periods of time if not mated. This results in too much oestrogen being produced and the hormone eventually poisons their bone marrow, leading to oestrogen toxicosis and aplastic anaemia, resulting in death.

## Dental & Nail Care

The best thing you can do to keep your ferret's teeth healthy is not to feed soft foods or treats. If you feed a crunchy diet, you will minimize the amount of tartar that builds up on your pet's teeth. If your ferret stops eating it may be due to a dental problem & you should take them to see a veterinarian as soon as possible.



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## Heat Stress

Ferrets are not greatly suited to the Australian climate. It is essential that you keep them cool throughout the hot days & warm during the cold winters.

Here are some tips to help you Ferret through summer:

- Keep your Ferret inside
- Provide shaded areas / shelter
- A good ventilated area
- Plenty of drinking water
- You can mist them with water
- Place them on cool surfaces e.g. tiles
- Ice blocks / frozen treats

If your Ferret is looking unwell during summer it is best to take them to visit the vet.

### OPENING HOURS AT ORANGE

#### VETERINARY HOSPITAL

MONDAY—FRIDAY

8.30AM-5.30PM

SATURDAY:

8.30AM-12PM

EMERGENCY HOURS 24/7 ON:

63618388

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# Caring For Your Ferret

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## Congratulations!

Your new Ferret will be a lot of fun & will become an important member of your household. With this comes a big responsibility for their health & wellbeing. Good housing, lots of affection & plenty of appropriate play & attention are vital for your rabbits progression to a healthy & enjoyable family pet. Here's some basic tips for helping with your Ferret's health.

## Where Do Ferret's Come From?

It has been claimed that the ancient Egyptians were the first to domesticate ferrets & have been known to date back to 1500 BC. They were & are still today used for hunting rabbits by running down into rabbit warrens & chasing them out. Ferrets became a popular pocket pet in the 1980's & their popularity has increased since then.

## Lifespan

Ferrets can live up to 8 years of age & they can weigh anywhere between 0.7-2kg. It is essential that your Ferrets gets all the necessary care that is needed for their breed, age & sex.



## Diet

Ferrets are strict carnivores & in the wild they prey upon and eat whole animals that consist of raw meat, raw bones, other tissue and digested vegetable matter.



They require a diet of meat/animal products that are typically high in protein and fat and low in carbohydrates and fibre. It is best to offer a constant supply of high quality commercial kitten food such as 'Hills Kitten Original' & not a commercial "ferret" food.

Eggs, meats, mince & insects are the best food sources for your ferret.

Human grade raw meaty bones may be offered occasionally (e.g. once a week) to help keep teeth clean. It is important to only offer human-grade raw meat/raw meaty bones as pet meat products can contain preservatives that can be detrimental to pet health.

Fruits and vegetables should not be given as they are high in sugar (fructose) & they should also not have any carbohydrates (sugar) either as their bodies cannot process it correctly.

Clean fresh water should be available at all times in the form of water bottles and/or heavy bowls.

## Vaccinations



Ferrets can contract Distemper (CDV), just like dogs can. So it is beneficial to vaccinate your ferret as soon as possible. Your ferret should be vaccinated at 8, 11 & 14 weeks of age.

Signs of distemper can be:

- Conjunctivitis / discharge from eyes
- Loss of appetite
- Lethargy & depression
- Reddening & thickening of the skin around mouth, foot pads & upper thigh area.
- Seizures
- Diarrhoea



## Worming

Your ferret can contract intestinal worms from the environment or from other ferrets. They can also contract heartworm from mosquitos just like dogs do. It is beneficial to give them an intestinal wormer & a heartworm preventative monthly such as 'Advocate'.

