

Ferrets



Ferrets are playful, intelligent, affectionate, loyal, and fun-loving. They are sure to capture your heart with their unconditional love and playful antics. Ferrets are also tough and great at hiding or masking disease which often leads to many ferret diseases that seem to strike quickly. It is important your ferret is examined by a veterinarian with ferret knowledge and experience so you can work as a team to ensure the best possible health care for your ferret. Furthermore, it is important you monitor your ferret's health and learn to recognize what is normal and not normal behavior for your ferret.

Wellness Exams

- Post-Purchase Exam: Physical Exam, Rabies Vaccine, Distemper Vaccine (may need a booster in 3-4 weeks), Fecal Analysis, Microchipping, Deslorelin Implant to prevent adrenal disease.
- Young and Mature Ferret (1 to 4 years of age): Annual Exam: Physical Exam, CBC/Chemistries if over 3 years of age, Rabies Vaccine, Distemper Vaccine every third year, Fecal Analysis
- Senior and Geriatric Ferret (4+): Physical Exam, CBC/Chemistries, Fecal Analysis, Radiographs, Cardiac Ultrasound

Emergencies

If your ferret is exhibiting any of the clinical signs described below your ferret needs to be seen right away.

If during normal business hours, contact us immediately at (603) 529-4999.

If after our normal business hours, contact CAVES immediately at (603) 227-1199.

Depression, lethargy, diarrhea, vomiting, seizures, open mouth breathing, grinding teeth (likely indicates pain/discomfort), pawing at the mouth (may indicate nausea due to very low blood sugar), lack of appetite, frequent trips to litter box with little or no urine production.

If you notice your ferret is not eating, you may try hand or syringe feeding warm chicken or beef baby food. If your ferret seems weak or disoriented, you can rub some Karo syrup, honey, or maple syrup on her gums. Then you can attempt to feed a high protein food (meat baby food) until you are able to get to our hospital. It is important we examine your ferret as soon as possible to address the underlying condition.

Services

Wellness Exams, Diagnostics, Dental Cleaning, Hormonal Suppression, Surgery, Vaccination, Grooming, Boarding, Microchipping, Nutritional Consultation, Behavioral Consultation, Antibody Titer Testing

Vaccination

Ferrets need two vaccinations (distemper vaccine and rabies vaccine). We recommend only using specific vaccines labeled for ferrets. Vaccine reactions are very common in ferrets and can be life threatening. Therefore, it is important you choose a ferret knowledgeable veterinarian so if an emergency does arise, your ferret will receive the proper life-saving care.

New Hampshire state law (RSA 436:100) requires every ferret 3 months of age and older shall be vaccinated against rabies. If your ferret is not up to date and bites someone he or she will be quarantined at owner's expense for at least ten days to monitor for signs of rabies.

Deslorelin Implant

Deslorelin (Suprelorin F) hormone implants assist in the medical treatment of adrenal gland disease in ferrets. Adrenal disease is extremely common in middle-aged and senior ferrets which occurs when tumors develop in one or both adrenal glands. This leads to a release of hormones that can cause clinical signs such as hair loss, itchy skin, anemia, prostate gland enlargement in males (with potential fatal urinary tract obstruction), and life-threatening bone marrow suppression.

This implant is placed subcutaneously (beneath the skin) between the shoulder blades by our veterinarian while your ferret is under light sedation. The implant has a slow sustained release action and is effective in ferrets for a period of 6 months or up to several years depending on the severity of your ferret's disease. Studies have shown that the most common signs of adrenal disease are all reduced quickly after implantation with the implant.

In addition to providing a medical treatment for adrenal disease in ferrets, the deslorelin implant also shows promise for prevention of adrenal disease in ferrets. At your first ferret examination, we will discuss specifics of the implant, how it works, and the best time to schedule the procedure. One could think of the deslorelin implant as a preventative "vaccination" against adrenal disease to prevent the disease from developing in your ferret.

Boarding

In order for your ferret to board with us, we require a physical exam within the last year. Your ferret must have had a rabies and distemper vaccination within the last year. A fecal test with no parasites observed is required as well. If your pet's examination was done by a different veterinarian, it needs to have been within the last six months and your pet's complete record needs to be sent to our hospital several days before boarding so we can ensure all required testing and vaccinations were completed.

Common Diseases/Conditions

- "Adreno-Cortical Disease" (cancer of the adrenal glands/Adrenal Disease)
- Insulinoma (cancer of the pancreas)
- Lymphoma (cancer of the white blood cells)
- Ear Mites
- Dental Disease
- Heart Disease
- Nutritional Disease
- Gastrointestinal Foreign Body
- Gastrointestinal Disease: epizootic catarrhal enteritis or *Helicobacter mustelae* infection
- Canine Distemper
- Upper Respiratory Disease