

Your Ferret Is So Unique, So Enjoyable!



A male ferret is known as a “hob”, and his female friend is a “jill”! Unlike other popular exotic small pets, ferrets are NOT members of the rodent family. They belong to the weasel or otter family of small animals. And as you might expect, many of their characteristics are different from hamsters, gerbils, rabbits, etc.

CHARACTERISTICS

- They live 6 – 8 years.
- Ferrets sleep a lot, about 18 hours per day!
- They're most active at dawn and dusk for about 2 hours each period.
- Your ferrets should be neutered, particularly females – they can develop aplastic anemia when they're in heat, which can be deadly.
- They should be bathed once or twice a month in lukewarm water – take care not to get soapy water in their eyes.
- Their eyes are quite weak; they're only able to discern blue and red.
- Nail trimming is necessary at least every other week.
- Ears require frequent cleaning with a cotton swab, using an ear wash available at your pet store.
- Your ferret should have regular dental care (guided by your vet) to check for plaque buildup and cavities.

THE FERRET HOME

A wire cage is probably best, as it will make your daily care easier. We suggest a minimum of 2' x 2' x 14" for one ferret, assuming that you will allow your pet some outside-of-the cage time. If you have more than one ferret, you will need a larger cage. Be sure that the wire spacing of the cage is such that your pet can't escape or get stuck! The cage floor should be covered with sludge-free paper bedding, pine or aspen shavings – all of these allow your pet to dig and tunnel. You might enhance the bedding with an old towel, blanket, or shirt; these become another toy for your ferret to cuddle and play with. You'll need a food dish and a water dish in the cage. We suggest a lock-in style that can't be easily overturned. Place a litter box in one corner of the cage. As your critter wakes up from

his extended sleep, put him in the litter box. He'll probably pop out at first, but if you keep putting him back, sooner or later he'll get the idea. (Most ferrets relieve themselves directly after sleep, and that's it until their next sleeping period.)

Part of the responsibility of having a pet is keeping everything clean. You can wipe down your cage daily, and it requires a good scrubbing once a week.

FOOD AND WATER

Do not use water bottles for ferrets! They don't allow a thirsty or dehydrating ferret to get enough water. They also wash their faces often, so a bowl-like water source is important. Fill the bowl at least twice daily.

Ferrets eat about every four hours. They eat only what they need and will leave food for later. They wake up to feed themselves as the impulse dictates – overfeeding is not a problem. Ferrets are carnivores and require a high meat protein diet. To make sure that they get the proper nutrients, specialty ferret foods are recommended. For treats they enjoy sweet fruits and vegetables like apples, bananas, grapes, carrots, cucumbers, and more.

Ferrets have a reputation for having an odor. However, most people don't find it offensive or strong. Some actually like the smell! Frequent baths help keep odor in check. Descending (surgical removal of the scent glands) a ferret is also an option to be discussed with your veterinarian.

Ferrets are playful animals. Much of their behavior is like a puppy or kitten that never grows up! All ferrets have a love of people and have engaging personalities, somewhat naughty, usually quite playful. And don't forget to give them toys...for chewing, for tunneling, and for crawling into!

All food and water bowls and toys need to be wiped down daily and washed thoroughly once a week.

 AMERICAN WOOD FIBERS



See other side to learn what bedding material is best for your small pet.

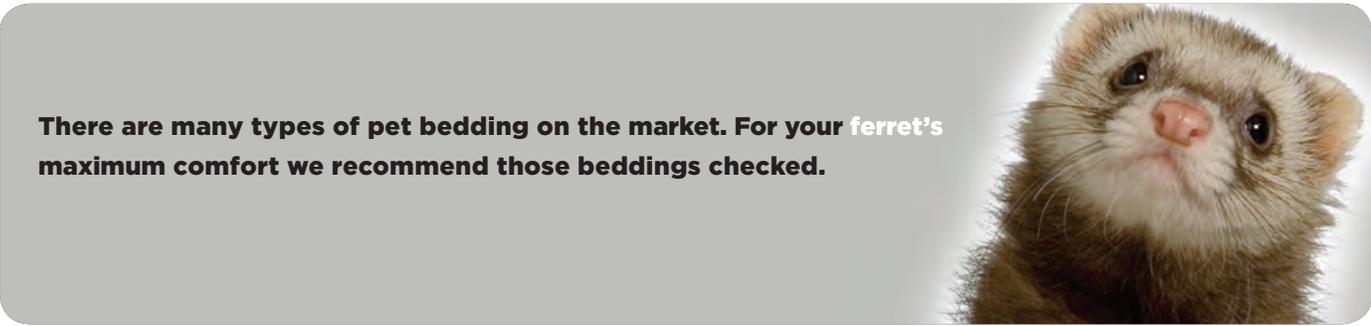
ABOUT SMALL-PET HABITATS IN GENERAL.

Routine care and maintenance will keep your small pet’s habitat clean, fresh, and safe — for your pet and for you.

- Habitats should be large enough to allow them to move around freely, and create “room” for various activities (e.g. eating, sleeping, going potty etc.).
- Habitats should be very well ventilated to prevent buildup of odor.
- Water supplies should be checked frequently, at least daily. Keep them filled with fresh clean water, and free of obstructions.
- Be certain the habitat is secure and that there is no way your pet can climb or chew its way out.
- Bedding should be replaced frequently — at least once a week — to absorb moisture and odors.

Before adding fresh bedding, wash the habitat with a gentle all-purpose cleaner, rinse it with clean water, and dry it thoroughly.

- Choose bedding that is free from chemicals and toxins.
- All-natural wood shavings (pine, aspen) and sludge-free paper products are recommended.
- Sludge-based paper beddings (often called “reclaimed paper” or “reclaimed cellulose”) and recycled newspaper pellets are not recommended. Independent tests show they contain dioxins, which are known carcinogens.
- Cedar is not recommended in an enclosed habitat, as the natural scent might cause respiratory problems for some small pets.



There are many types of pet bedding on the market. For your ferret’s maximum comfort we recommend those beddings checked.

Small Animal Bedding Matrix

	 Kiln-Dried Softwood/ Pine	 Kiln-Dried Aspen Shavings	Gray Paper Pulp (Sludge Based)	Wood Shavings Mixed with Paper Pulp	Paper Pellets- Gray, Colored or Crumbled	Cellulose Paper Granules	Pelletized Pine	Colored or Bleached Pulp	 Shredded Specialty Paper
Healthy									
All-Natural									
Odor Absorption									
Liquid Absorption									
Dust-Free									
Economical									
Nesting									
Flushable/mulchable									
Easy to Use									
Softness									
Fun/Fashion									
Dioxin Free	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Your pet ferret deserves the best! For that reason, we recommend the dioxin free bedding checked.



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