

*Full of advice  
on caring for  
your pet*

## *Your guide to* **Ferrets**



*Jollyes, only the  
best for you and your pets*



[www.jollyes.co.uk](http://www.jollyes.co.uk)

# Are you ready?



Ferrets make great pets; they are very smart, lively and sociable animals that love running around and exploring. They should be kept with other ferrets, as they are very sociable animals. The average lifespan of a ferret can range from 8 – 10 years old, however the oldest living ferret lived to the ripe old age of 14 years old.

Your ferret will require plenty of exercise and handling on a daily basis. They are a big commitment and you must ensure that you can provide a long and lasting home to your new family member.

## Selecting your Ferret

**Which Ferret?** Ferrets come in a variety of different colours – albino, sable, cinnamon and the polecat. Ensure to buy your ferret from a reputable breeder or pet shop.

**Males tend to be larger than females**

### **How old should my Ferret be?**

At least 6 weeks old and fully weaned before purchase.

**What to look for** - A healthy ferret should be alert and have bright eyes.

Their coats should be glossy and soft with no sign of bald patches or sores on the skin. Look out for signs of breathing problems and discharge from eyes, ears, mouth or nose.

**Pairings** - Ferrets are sociable animals so it is advisable to house them with another ferret.



# At home with your Ferret

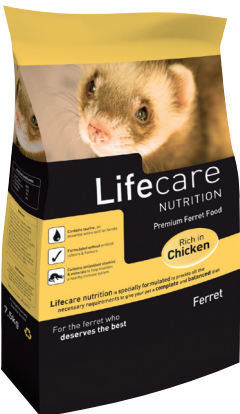
**Indoors** - Keeping your ferret indoors is the most popular option. There are a variety of indoor cages, provide the largest cage possible with at least two levels to offer sufficient room for your ferret to play and move around freely.

Layer wood shavings on the floor of the cage and lots of fresh hay, as they love to burrow. Provide plenty of tunnels and toys for their cage to keep them entertained. Ensure to clean the cage thoroughly at least once a week with a petsafe disinfectant. Locate the food and water bottles on a separate level from their litter tray.

**Outdoors** - Provide your ferret with a large strong cage with good bolts and wire. They are very active animals and need ample space to exercise and move around freely. Runs need to be on a solid floor with a lid that can be hooked down as Ferrets will escape under or over if given the opportunity.

**Location** - Ferrets can suffer from heat exhaustion so ensure to place your cage away from direct sunlight for both indoor and outdoor ferrets.

**Settling in time** - Allow your ferret 24 hours to settle into their new surroundings without handling them.



**Bathing** - Bath your ferret every 3 months to reduce the oils they produce from their skin. It is advisable to bath them in your sink, bath or washing up bowl.

Use warm water a few inches deep.

You must use a special ferret shampoo.

They may love it or hate it but be ready for them to try and escape the first few times. Towel dry them after the bath.

**Ferrets need lots of attention and supervision**

**Neutering & Spaying** - Unless you wish to breed then it is advisable to neuter your ferret. This can be done at 6-7 months old. Neutering in male ferrets will reduce their smell significantly and their coat will be less greasy. Male ferrets in groups should be neutered to avoid fighting and biting. It is essential to spay your female ferret. She will not come out of season unless injected or mated each time. this can lead to death. Spaying a female ferret also reduces the risk of ovarian cancer and hormone driven diseases.



## Diet

**What should I feed my ferret?** Ferrets are carnivorous but feeding them fresh meat can be inconvenient and expensive and is not recommended. Your local Jollyes will be pleased to advise you about the various complete dry foods available for ferrets.

**Water** - Ensure fresh water is available for your ferret at all times.



## Health

**Insulinoma** - Ferrets are known to suffer from Insulinoma, which is cancer of the pancreas. Symptoms of this are your ferret may faint and they would become very lethargic. Contact your local vet for more advice.

**Hair balls** - To reduce hair balls groom your ferret regularly.

**Distemper** - It is vital to vaccinate your ferret against distemper, as this is a fatal disease, which can be brought into your house on your shoes. Symptoms of this include loss of appetite, vomiting, diarrhoea, runny eyes and nose, coughing, weight loss and seizures.

**Ear mites** - If your ferret is scratching their ears a lot they may have ear mites. Clean their ears regularly to prevent this. A ferret or cat ear mite medication will treat this or contact your local vet for advice. Mite infestations can be fatal.

**Cold/Flu** - Your ferret can contract a cold or flu from humans. Therefore it is advisable not to handle your ferret when you are ill. Their symptoms will include a runny nose, sneezing and a temperature. They should get better on their own, but if you are worried then contact your local vet as soon as possible.

**Worming** - Consult your vet about worming your ferret/s.



*Ferrets are  
very playful and  
fun to watch*



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# Shopping Checklist

We recommend the following items for your new ferret.

## Ferret Checklist

- Suitable indoor or outdoor cage
- Wood shavings
- Pet safe disinfectant
- Complete ferret food
- Food bowl
- Water bottle
- Treats
- Tubes and toys
- Grooming brush
- Ferret care book

It is now time to enjoy your ferret and watch him grow into an important member of the family.

## For further information contact:

Jollyes Petfood Superstores  
1 Lea Road, Waltham Abbey, Essex EN9 1AS

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