

FEEDING YOUR FERRET

Pet ferret nutrition has evolved dramatically in the past few years. Here's what you need to know to make educated choices in what to feed your ferret:

Ferrets are obligate or strict carnivores-while dogs and cats will consume some plant material, ferrets never do. This is one reason why commercial dog and cat diets are not ok to feed. Even the formulated ferret diets contain some grain and plant-based nutrients, but the ferret's digestive system is not capable of handling these, resulting in diarrhea in the short-term, potentially causing inflammatory bowel disease (similar to Crohn's disease in humans) in the long-term.

The other major issue is carbohydrates, particularly simple sugars. The second most common form of cancer in ferrets is insulinoma, which is a tumor in the pancreas that secretes insulin. This clinical condition is the opposite of diabetes, where the ferret's blood sugar drops, sometimes low enough to cause seizures and brain damage. Simple sugars in the diet will make the blood sugar spike and can contribute to the development of or worsening of an insulinoma.

We have researched available diets and listed our recommendations below, in general you want a diet that has 30-40% protein (from animal sources), 20-30% fat (from animal sources), and not more than 3% fiber. The top 3 ingredients listed should be animal meat (not by-product), consisting of natural prey such as chicken/poultry, rabbit, egg and fish. Ferrets don't take down cattle or deer in the wild, so beef, lamb, venison and such really are not appropriate. We do not recommend homemade diets because it is almost impossible to provide ALL the nutrients the ferret needs this way, but you can certainly supplement with whole meat treats. Commercial treats as well should be meat-based, marketed for ferrets or cats. Please do not feed breakfast cereals or dried fruit of any kind!

Our recommendation is to choose 2-3 foods from the list below and provide a mix to your ferret as there is no one perfect diet.

Ferret Diets

- Wysong Archetypal 1 or 2
- Evo
- Zupreem
- Marshalls
- Mazuri
- 8-in-1 Ultimate
- Totally Ferret

Cat/Kitten Diets

- Innova
- Orijen
- Wellness Super 5 Mix Salmon
- Blue Buffalo
- Stella and Chewies feline

