

FERRET Foods

Ferrets require a specific ratio of nutrients to ensure good health and body condition. Over recent years a number of commercially available ferret foods have become available through shopping outlets which makes obtaining suitable foods much easier.

A basic ferret diet should be high in meat protein and fat and have low fibre content.

Ferrets are regularly fed on demand with commercial kibble / biscuit being available to the animal on a 24x7 basis via bowl or purpose designed feeder. Their biscuit based diet can be enhanced through cooked meats such as chicken / rabbit and offal (heart, kidney, liver) however these should be fed in moderation and not as an exclusive alternative to a purpose formulated ferret diet.

Whilst raw meat can be given to ferrets (and often is by working ferreters) this may not always be convenient and to the owner's own personal liking. Raw meat in summer months tends to go off quickly and as ferrets do sometimes store food then this can become a hygiene issue.

Whilst there are limited commercial treats available, Cod Liver Oil smeared sparingly on the fingers is liked by some ferrets as is beaten egg mixed with cat milk. Ferrets are not tolerant of foods which include lactose therefore they should not be given any dairy products such as milk, cream or ice-cream.

It is also tempting to give ferrets chocolate, sweets and other foodstuffs which we have in our diet however the high sugar content of these are detrimental to the overall lifestyle of the ferret and will cause dental issues as the ferret goes on. In some cases, human foods can be poisonous for small animals therefore only formulated ferret treats should be given

It is recommended that the ferret is fed on a commercially available food such as Supreme Scientific, James Wellbeloved, Alpha, Gilbertson & Page, Bephar and Chudleys. This list is not exclusive and you will find own brand foods in larger pet shop chains that equally offer the same nutritional requirement.

If you are changing your ferret's food from one brand to another then try to do this gradually. An immediate change may result in a significant change to the condition of the ferret's stool or it may be that the food is not palatable to the animal. If this is given as the only option then your ferret might not eat enough to sustain a healthy body weight.

A mature ferret will eat approximately 60 grams of kibble / biscuit per day however this will differ if their diet is supported through other foodstuffs. It will also vary depending on the year. Whilst most ferrets maintain a stable body weight, if your ferret is particularly overweight / underweight then it is worth discussing with a knowledgeable vet to ensure weight gain or loss is appropriate.