

Ferrets

Did you know that female ferrets are known as '**Jills**' and male ferrets as '**Hobs**'?

Ferrets can be lots of different colours - the polecat ferret is the most popular and are buff coloured with black markings on their faces, feet and tails. You can also have albino ferrets which are white with pink eyes.

If you take your pet ferret out in public areas he or she should be vaccinated against canine distemper virus.

Housing your pet ferret

Ferrets have been known to be escape artists, so it is very important to make sure your ferret's cage is secure. A wooden hutch and run with waterproof roof is ideal. Inside, your ferret will need lots of nice bedding to sleep on such as straw, hay or shredded paper and a litter tray.

Feeding your ferret

Ferrets are carnivores, which means they eat meat but shouldn't eat a lot of carbohydrates. You can buy specialist ferret food which is high in protein and fat but low in carbohydrate and fibre. Your ferret will also like eggs or a bone to chew on. It's best to leave food out for your ferret as they need to eat little and often.

Always ensure your ferret has to clean fresh water at all times.

Neutering ferrets

Neutering male ferrets can reduce aggression (and smell). In more recent times, it has come to light that surgically neutering ferrets, both male and female, may result in adrenal disease, so we no longer recommend this where possible.

The Jill or female ferret is an "induced ovulator" - once she has come into season it will persist until she has mated. Prolonged oestrus means a prolonged exposure to a hormone oestrogen, which eventually causes bone marrow suppression, anaemia, and sometimes death.

A hormone injection (Delvosterone) can be used once the Jill is in season to suppress the oestrus, but is not a permanent solution. It is also possible to use a vasectomised male to mate with the Jill and therefore bring her out of season. Please contact us at Hillside to discuss vasectomising ferrets.

A hormone implant (Suprelorin) can be used in both Jills and Hobs to chemically neuter them without causing the medical problems associated with surgical neutering. The implant needs to be replaced every 18-24 months, usually under a

light gaseous anaesthetic.

For more information regarding ferrets and in particular neutering, please contact Hillside Vets to make an appointment and we will discuss the options with you.

Disclaimer: Hillside Vets' website is intended to be used only as a guide and information resource, not as an alternative to a veterinary consultation and advice. Nothing contained in this website should be construed as medical advice or diagnosis. For specific healthcare advice please discuss the particular symptoms and circumstances of your pet with your vet.