

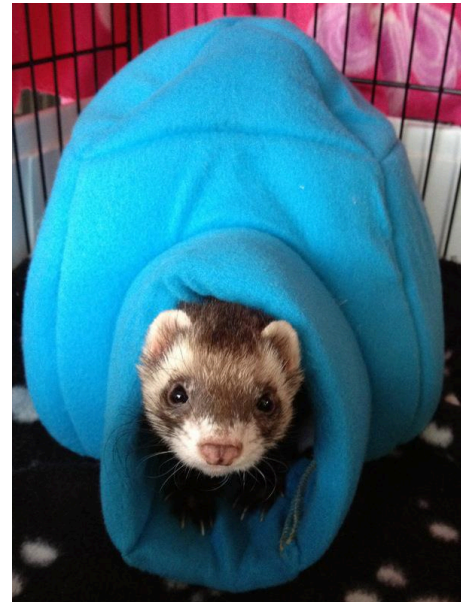


## How to Nurse your Ferret at Home

**Stay calm and don't panic** - Staying as calm as you can is one of the best ways to ensure a speedy recovery for your ferret.

**Medicating:** Make sure to give any medications that you have been prescribed for your ferret as per the instructions told to you by the vet. Never self-medicate your ferret without first speaking to a vet. Each medication is different and acts on the body in different ways. Some medications should not be given in certain situations and can make things worse.

**Feeding:** Always provide your ferret with all their normal food during times of illness. Soaking their pellets/biscuits in warm water to soften them often makes them easier to eat and more appealing. Make sure to discard uneaten meat products/whole prey once spoiled or every 3 – 6 hours. Hills A/D recovery food is a high-energy food that can be useful for unwell ferrets, this can be warmed to make it more appealing for your ferret.



Many ferrets also love boiled warmed chicken breast. Nutrigel is a high-energy vitamin concentrate which can also be offered. Most ferrets love the taste and will eat this happily.

Make sure fresh water is available at all times. Sometimes it's a good idea to provide water in both a sipper bottle as well as a bowl as it provides multiple options for your ferret.

**Housing:** Generally it is best to keep your ferret in its normal house to reduce stress, however if your ferret is housed outside normally it is often a good idea to move them inside into a warm comfortable environment. Severely unwell ferrets can be housed in carry cages with blankets for confinement, this provides easy access for you and this helps to provide a secure, comfy bed for the ferret. Make sure the cage/enclosure is cleaned regularly – at least once to twice daily. If the ferret uses a litter tray then make sure to clean this regularly throughout the day as it becomes soiled. Please also make sure all food and water bowls are easily accessible.

During times of illness it is sometimes wise to keep ferrets to one cage level – this helps to prevent them from falling and injuring themselves. If you are able to it is a good idea to move the ferret's house into a quiet spot away from noises, other pets and people.

**Other Important Points:** Where possible it is a good idea to monitor your ferret's faecal and urine output as well as their temperature. If you have a thermometer at home this can be used (with some lubrication) to measure their temperature by gently inserting the tip of the





thermometer into your ferret's anus. A normal ferret body temperature is generally between 37.8 – 40C. If your ferret has a low temperature then providing additional warmth by using wheat heat packs, hot water bottles, towels/blankets or warming the room they are in is a good idea. Be very careful not to overheat your ferret or burn them, wrapping the heat source in towels or blankets can help to minimize this risk.

It is also important to check your ferret's hydration regularly, this can be checked by the skin tent test as well as feeling their mucous membranes inside their mouth (i.e. their gums). If their mucous membranes feel dry or tacky then it is likely that your ferret is dehydrated. To perform the skin tent test gently lift up some skin (to make a tent shape) at the scruff of the neck on your ferret and then release it – if the skin bounces back too normal straight away then your ferret is generally well hydrated. If the skin is slow to return to normal or stays in the tented shape, then your ferret is generally dehydrated. A rough rule of thumb is that in general most ferrets need around 100ml of water per kg of bodyweight per 24 hours.

**Ferret First Aid Kit:** It is a good idea to put together a ferret first aid kit to have at home in case you need to nurse your ferret. In general the following are helpful to have available:

- Medications dispensed by your vet– Always check with a vet before self-medicating your ferret
- Nutrigel
- A tin of Hills A/D
- Syringes in assorted sizes– 1 ml, 3 ml, 10 ml
- Towels and blankets
- A small box, area or carry cage that they can be kept in if they are unwell
- Heat packs
- Treats

**For Afterhours Overnight Emergencies:** We recommend the following 24 hour hospitals in Perth:

- Vet24 – Balcatta – 93454644
- The Animal Hospital Emergency Centre – Murdoch - 1300 652 494

We operate out of the same hospital as the above clinics so it allows your ferret to be transferred into our care in the morning, rather than them have to move location. It is important to remember that emergency clinics are there to provide initial first aid for your ferret during the night and may not be experts in ferret care.

We hope that this caresheet has been helpful. It is important to remember that there is only so much you can do at home and that if your ferret is not improving with the care and medications provided by your vet then it is best to get them rechecked. For any further information please feel free to get in touch with us.

