



A Guide to Feeding Your Ferret

Ensuring the well-being of your ferret involves providing a nutritionally balanced diet that aligns with their natural carnivorous instincts. This guide explores various feeding options, emphasizing the importance of protein and fat while steering clear of plant-based proteins.

Ferrets are obligate carnivores (meat eaters) and are not equipped to digest plant proteins. Dietary fibre is not important for ferrets, and they have little need for carbohydrates in their diet. Instead, ferrets require diets high in protein and fat, which is often achieved by feeding either whole prey or balanced raw meals containing muscle meat, bone, and organs. You've probably noticed that your ferret has sharp teeth and a strong jaw! Their teeth allow them to shear meat and organs, and their jaw allows them to crush bones. Ferrets also have a short gastro-intestinal tract, which is designed to digest high amounts of protein and fat.



Feeding Options for Ferrets



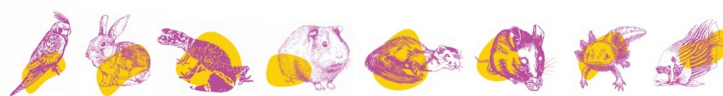
Whole Prey

As carnivorous predators, eating whole prey is quite natural for your ferret and is a nutritionally balanced option. Your ferret may enjoy eating small prey including mice, rats, day old chicks, quail and even rabbits. These food items can be purchased frozen from pet meat supply stores and some pet shops. It is important to note that the feeding of live vertebrate prey is illegal in Australia.

Raw Feeding

Feeding whole prey isn't the right choice for everyone, and many people prefer to offer their ferret a raw mix.

Feeding raw is fine, so long as the mix that you are offering your ferret is nutritionally balanced. For example, feeding only mince or pet meat can be harmful or even fatal for your ferret over time. The reason for this is that these items are often devoid of calcium, vitamins, and minerals, which are crucial for your ferret's wellbeing. To ensure your ferret gets everything they need, see our [Raw Feeding Recipe](#).





Kibble

Commercially available kibble is not always ideal for your ferret and should never be considered a complete diet. However, if you wish to feed your ferret kibble in addition to whole prey or a raw mix, there are a few things to consider when choosing an appropriate product:

- Protein – ferrets require a minimum of 30-35% protein.
- Fat – ferrets require a minimum of 20-30% fat.
- Fibre – the less the better! Avoid any kibble containing more than 4% fibre or plant proteins.

Remember, the best kibble won't always be the one with a picture of a ferret on the bag. If in doubt, try Vetafarm ferret origins or Ziwi Peak for cats in either the lamb, chicken, or beef variety!

Treat Options for Ferrets

Egg Yolks

Egg yolks are a popular treat amongst most ferrets! A safe amount to feed is two raw egg yolks, per ferret, per week. Whilst feeding a small amount of egg whites may not cause much harm, we do recommend against feeding whole raw eggs due to the possibility of causing Vitamin B deficiency.

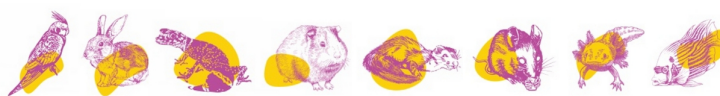


Nutrigel

Nutrigel (also known as Nutripet) is a product few ferrets can resist! It is however very high in sugar, and treating your ferret with it regularly is like constantly letting a child have candy! For this reason, we recommend it as a "sometimes" treat. You may see us use it in hospital as bribery, to convince a sick ferret to eat, or to distract your ferret from an injection, blood test, or an uncomfortable procedure. At home you may find it helpful in administering medications, or for keeping your ferret still while you clip their nails.

Duck Fat

Duck fat is another popular treat, which many ferrets will go crazy for. Again, feeding in moderation is the key, as offering too much duck fat does have the potential to cause pancreatitis. We





recommend feeding no more than 1 teaspoon per ferret, a maximum of two to three times per week.



Foods to Avoid

Dairy Products

Dairy products should not be fed to ferrets, due to the possibility of causing gastro-intestinal upsets. Small amount of lactose free milk can be offered but have no nutritional value.

Addressing Picky Eating Habits

Ferrets can be quite fussy with what they like to eat! They often don't appreciate changes to their diet, even if the reason their diet is changing is to offer them something healthier. The best time to get ferrets used to different foods is before 12 weeks of age, so where possible, ferrets should be introduced to a variety of different meat items while they are young. If you are trying to change an older ferret's diet, it is best to do this gradually (over at least one to two weeks). This will help to avoid gastro-intestinal upsets, and the ferret will be more likely to accept their new food if it is not a sudden change. Other options for tempting your ferret to accept a new food item include warming the item up to enhance the smell, softening it with warm water to make it easier to eat, or adding a small amount of something palatable such as egg yolk or duck fat.

Providing the right nutrition for your ferret involves a thoughtful combination of whole prey, raw feeding, and carefully chosen treats. Understanding your ferret's unique dietary needs ensures their health and happiness. For more information on ferret dietary requirements, contact your local [Unusual Pet Vets](https://www.unusualpetvets.com.au) team.

