



# BRONTY'S FACT SHEET

## FERRET

### General

Ferrets are very sociable animals & can make wonderful pets, especially if well-handled and socialised from an early age. They are inquisitive and playful animals with characteristics similar to those of dogs & cats & are easily trained to use a litter box.

They need several hours of supervised exercise & play outside of their cage each day & can be quite mischievous. You need to handle them & give attention to them when they are awake to teach them to play nicely. They can bite if they are not given enough attention. Ferrets get along with cats & most dogs if socialised with them early but should always be supervised. Avoid contact with pet birds, rabbits, guinea pigs, mice & rats.

### Feeding

The ferret is a carnivore (meat eater) & should be fed a diet of good quality premium kitten kibble (dry cat food), such as HILLS Science Diet – Feline (available at Brontosaurus).

Water needs to be available at all times for your ferret. DO NOT feed your ferret milk.

### Housing

Good size cage is required for your ferret to be in when you are not at home. In the cage you need to include a litter tray & it must be kept clean. Where you house your pet ferret is also important as they are very susceptible to heat stress or stroke; ferrets should be protected from temperatures above 26°C.

Ferrets can escape from even the smallest holes so make sure when you let them out that the space is "ferret proof". If playing outside they MUST BE in a harness & on a lead.

Provide soft fluffy towels for them to sleep in, or a hammock, soft house or hanging pouch which are available from Brontosaurus.

### General Up-keep & Training

When training your ferret DO NOT smack or harm them. They do not learn this way. Simply use a deep voice & stop them doing the act.

Training your ferret to come to the sound of a squeaky toy by rewarding with a treat is a good idea for those times when you can't find your pet.

Hard plastic toys, dog chews, golf balls, ping-pong balls and cardboard toys are generally suitable.

### Health & Well-being

Ferrets have an average life span of 8 years.

They need their claws trimmed regularly & will wiggle & squeal while you do this. Try laying them in your lap with their favourite toy, this should keep them happy.

Desexing: Desexing a jill (female ferret) is recommended before the onset of first oestrus unless you want to breed from her, as female ferrets remain in heat unless mated, & prolonged high levels of oestrogen can result in bone marrow suppression & subsequent death. De-sexing of male ferrets (hobs) is also recommended to control aggressive territorial behaviour and reduce their musky odour.

Ferrets should be vaccinated at eight, 12, and 16 weeks of age against canine distemper - a fatal disease in ferrets. A booster and check-up will also be required once a year. At five-years of age a complete geriatric work-up is recommended for the early detection of heart disease and cancer, commonly seen in older ferrets.

For more information please give us a call on (02) 6652 4308 and we will assist you with any queries. Also try the website [www.all-about-ferrets.com](http://www.all-about-ferrets.com)