

## Diets, How To Switch

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# switching your ferret's diet

Switching your ferret's diet is something you may need to do for health reasons, or you may just want to change your ferret over to a more nutritious food. Whatever your reason may be, there are specific rules that you should follow when you switch your ferret's diet to avoid stomach problems, diarrhea, or more serious health issues.

### When Should You Switch Your Ferret's Diet?

Though there are many diets sold for ferrets, not all of them are nutritionally complete. If you are feeding your ferret a food that is not meeting her daily nutritional requirements, you will need to switch her diet. [Ferret food](#) should contain at least 35% protein and around 20% fat, and it should be low in fiber and carbohydrates. At least three of the first five ingredients should be high quality sources of animal protein. Try to avoid ferret food with high amounts of grains, such as corn and wheat.

There are some medical conditions or health concerns that may prompt a food switch. These include:

- Insulinoma
- Food allergy
- Bladder stones
- Inflammatory Bowel Disease

### How to Make the Switch

While there are some health issues that will require a rapid food switch, in most cases you will need to do it slowly. Ferrets imprint on their regular food, which means that they will often initially refuse all other foods. Attempting to switch your ferret's diet abruptly can cause your ferret to refuse all food, which can lead to gastrointestinal issues including diarrhea or possibly even gastric ulcers.

When you switch your ferret's diet, start by adding a very small amount of the new food to the old food. A good guideline to follow is a ratio of one part new food to nine parts old. Over a period of two to four weeks, depending on how quickly your ferret takes to the new food, slowly increase the amount of new food and decrease the amount of old food until the old food has been completely eliminated from the mix.

Don't be surprised if you see loose stool during the switch. A few loose stools are par for the course as your ferret's body adjusts to the new food. However, if the loose stool develops into regular diarrhea, contact your veterinarian.

### My Ferret Isn't Cooperating - Help!

Very picky ferrets will often refuse the new food no matter how slowly you mix it in. In these situations, you can try the following tricks to get your ferret to try the



new food:

- Put the new and old foods together in a plastic bag to mix the smells together.
- Grind up the new food and mix it into a paste or [duk soup](#).
- Grind up both foods (using the same ratio as the mix and increasing the amount of new food in the same way) and mix them into a paste.
- Drizzle [FerreTone](#) on the new food.
- Feed the new food out of your hand like a treat.

Even with these methods, it will probably take a while to switch a picky ferret over to a new food, so be patient. Ferrets that have never been exposed to new foods or that have only eaten one food can take a couple months to make the switch completely.

