

Ferret FAQs: Diet and Nutrition

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Do you know what kind of diet your ferret needs? Are you giving your ferret the right treats? Like any other pet, ferrets have very specific nutritional needs. A proper diet can make the difference between an active, healthy ferret and a lethargic, malnourished one. The questions in this section will help you pick out a ferret food, healthy treats, instruct you on how to change diets, and more.

[Appropriate Ferret Treats >](#)

[Cat Food \(not recommended\) >](#)

[Feeding Quality Ferret Food >](#)

[Ferret Food Senior Diet >](#)

[Switching Diets >](#)



What treats should I give my ferret?



Ferrets' treats should complement their diet, not fill them up so they don't want to eat their food. So treats should have the same nutritional value as food does - look for something that is meat based, that has a lot of animal protein. Sometimes just giving your ferrets their regular food out of your hand will be viewed as a treat! Remember, treats should not be more than 10% of your ferret's diet.

Some healthy treats are:

[Bandits Ferret Treats](#)

[N-Bone Ferret Chew Treats](#)

Gerber Chicken & Chicken Gravy Baby Food

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Can I feed my ferret cat food?



While there are some high quality cat/kitten diets out there that may be considered acceptable for ferrets, it is strongly recommended that you feed your ferret a high quality [ferret food](#). Cat food is similar in many ways to ferret food, however, ferrets have unique nutritional requirements that ferret food is made to fulfill. In order to meet your ferret's nutritional needs for overall superior health, ferret food is best. No matter how high quality a cat food is, it is still made for a cat, not a ferret.

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What do ferrets eat?



[Ferret food](#) must be high in animal protein (chicken, turkey, beef, lamb, etc) and fat. Protein should be about 35% to 40% minimum, and fat should be around 18% to 20% minimum. They do not have the ability to digest fiber, so their food must be low in fiber. Look for a food that has quality sources of animal protein and fat as at least three of the first five ingredients. Most cat and kitten foods do not have the proper nutrition that ferrets need for their main food. Dog food lacks even more of the nutrients needed to properly maintain ferret health.

It is best to give your ferret a variety of food mixed together, that way if one of the foods becomes unavailable, your ferret will still have other food to eat. In general, ferrets tend to be picky eaters that imprint on their regular diet, so it's good to have more than one choice in their everyday mix of kibble.

If you do have to switch foods, try to mix the new food with the old food before the old food runs out. That way you can switch them over slowly, which will make it more likely they will accept and eat the new food.

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When should I switch my ferret to a senior diet?



Senior ferret diets are formulated with less protein and less fat, so they are considered appropriate for less active older ferrets. Most senior diets are made for ferrets over the age of 4, but they aren't always necessary. Senior diets are helpful if you have a ferret with kidney problems, as high amounts of protein can be harmful if your ferret has a kidney problem. Ask your veterinarian what to feed. However, as long as your ferret is in good health there is no reason to switch to a senior diet.

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How do I change my ferret's diet?



Never suddenly switch your ferret's food. Sudden dietary changes can cause diarrhea, and your ferret may refuse to eat. If you decide to switch diets, do it slowly. Start by mixing in the new food with the old food at a ratio of 1 part new food to 9 parts old. Gradually increase the ratio of new to old food until the old food is completely phased out. If done correctly, this should take a few weeks at the very least. If your ferret refuses to eat the new food, here are some things you can try:

- Put the new food and old food in a zippered sandwich bag so the new food will smell like the old food
- Grind up either the new food or both foods and make a [duck soup](#) with it
- Drizzle [FerreTone](#) on the new food. Make sure to change the food daily if you use this method to avoid spoilage

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