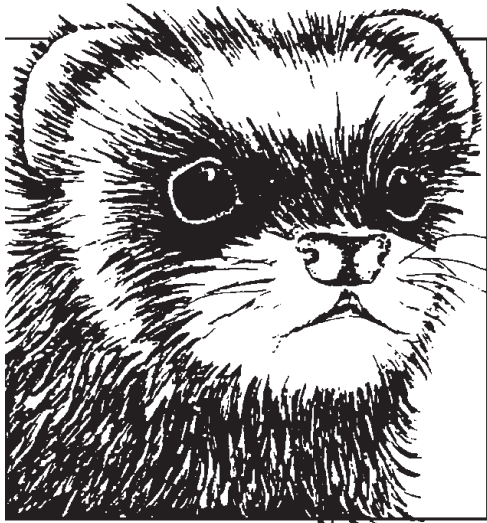


bottle, and appropriate bedding. Many ferrets enjoy hammocks made out of old t-shirts, jeans, or sweatshirts. **Never use any kind of shavings or wood chips since these cause respiratory problems in ferrets.** The recommended litter is a paper product that is recyclable, such as "Good Mews" sold in grocery stores or "Crown Bedding" sold in feed stores. Never use scoopable litter; it is frequently ingested and causes blockages. Clay cat litter is also not recommended for female ferrets. A ferret harness is recommended when you take your ferret on a walk. Toys should be nonedible such as heavy-duty baby toys, golf or tennis balls, balls with bells inside, dryer hose tubing, or just simple plastic or paper grocery bags. Be sure to dispose of toys if they get ragged or torn.

If you answered any of these questions NO (except #4), then a ferret may not be right for you. There are already too many unwanted ferrets looking for a new place to live with someone who will care for and spend time with them. Please consider all the factors involved in pet care including time, money, and health care before you decide to purchase a ferret. When



considering a ferret, remember that a healthy ferret is alert, has a shiny coat, long whiskers, bright eyes, clean ears, clean teeth, is free from fleas and ticks, and has a docile, playful temperament.

If you decide a ferret may be right for you, remember that a low price for a ferret can never make up for a poor-quality ferret with health or behavior problems. Before you decide to purchase a ferret, purchase a ferret book such as *Ferrets. A Complete Pet Owner's Manual* by Chuck and Fox Morton to find out how to properly care for your pet.

If you have questions about ferret care or where to purchase a ferret, check out the Ferret Central web site. It contains links to lots of good information about ferret care. Additionally, you can contact your local ferret or humane shelter to find out more information about ferret care. If all else fails, you may want to contact whoever gave you this brochure in the first place. Their name and/or phone and address should appear somewhere on this brochure!

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Is a Ferret



The Right Pet For You?

Even though ferrets are cute, cuddly, and playful, please stop and take time to read the following information and see if a ferret is the right pet for you.

1. Are you almost always at home?

Ferrets require daily care. They need to be fed, given fresh water, have their litter box cleaned, and have a minimum of 30 minutes of exercise outside the cage. Ferrets cannot be put in a cage and left there. They are social animals who are dependent on humans for companionship, much like a dog. Also, ferrets cannot be let outside unless they are on a leash or under close supervision. Ferrets are too inquisitive of their surroundings and cannot find their way back home.

2. Are you willing to spend the next twelve years dedicated to your pet?

Ferrets are a long-term commitment. Ferrets that are well cared for will live 5 to 12 years.

3. Are your children over 4 years old?

Ferrets can play rough and nip, much like puppies, until trained not to do so. Small children can be rough with ferrets and may lack the sense of responsibility needed to care for them. Having a ferret around a small child or infant means constant supervision. **Never leave a ferret and a small child alone together, even for a few seconds.**



4. Do you have birds, rabbits, or other small animals?

Generally, ferrets get along well with other household pets. Cats will usually seek high areas or may choose to play with ferrets. Be sure to supervise when cats are playing with ferrets since the ferret's eyes may be injured by cat claws. Many dogs will ignore ferrets. However, ferrets may play rough with birds, rabbits, gerbils, hamsters, or guinea pigs and injure them.

5. Can you afford high quality cat food such as Iams or Science Diet?

A ferret requires 5 to 8 pounds monthly of a high-protein (at least 30%) dry cat food or ferret food. The cat food found in supermarkets or grocery stores is **not** acceptable since it contains fillers and dyes. Cat food containing fish should never be fed to ferrets. Never feed a ferret dog food! Feeding these foods can result in a malnourished ferret and can also cause many diseases including cancer. Good quality ferret foods include Totally Ferret and Marshall Farms Ferret Food.

6. Can you afford to have your ferret spayed or neutered?

A female ferret **MUST** be spayed at about six months of age. A female ferret (jill) will not go out of season unless she is bred. This prolonged state of estrus causes aplastic anemia, a **FATAL** condition. **She will die!** Male ferrets (hobs) will develop a strong odor which will make them unacceptable as house pets if they are not neutered. Also, hobs will not get along together once they come into season and may kill or seriously injure each other. Ferrets make wonderful house pets once they are spayed or neutered. Descending is an optional surgery that is not always recommended. Descending has been linked with anal infections and prolapsed rectums. Neutering or spaying will reduce the musky odor that ferrets develop as they mature.

7. Can you afford proper veterinary care including shots?

Ferrets are generally very healthy pets. However, many veterinarians consider ferrets to be "exotic" pets and charge higher fees to care for them so the office charge can be much more than a dog or a cat. Ferret kits **MUST** have a series of three canine distemper shots given at 8 weeks, 11 weeks and 14 weeks of age and adult ferrets must have a yearly booster. Canine distemper is **100% FATAL** in ferrets. Ferrets must receive a "killed virus" distemper vaccination. The only recommended canine distemper vaccinations are FERVAC-D or Galaxy-D; the only recognized rabies vaccine is IMRAB-3. Make sure you consult with a veterinarian who understands ferrets for the proper type of canine distemper shot and to get the proper rabies vaccination. Also, some ferrets are susceptible to tumors, which have been produced by repeated inbreeding or being fed a poor quality of food. Remember, as a ferret owner you have complete responsibility for your pet's health and well-being.



8. Can you afford a house for your ferret?

Ferrets require a home of their own. Even if you plan to let your ferret have the run of the house when you are home, it is best to cage them when you are not home and at night. A cage with a minimum size of 24 inches long by 18 inches wide by 18 inches high is recommended, although a 36 inch long cage would be better. Basic ferret housing requires a litter pan, a heavy ceramic or weighted bowl, a 16 ounce water
