

Adrenal Gland Disease in Ferrets

Adrenal gland disease is, unfortunately, a common disease of pet ferrets in the United States. Most affected ferrets are older than 2 years. While the exact cause of this condition has not been determined, it is believed that spaying and neutering ferrets at an early age plays a role. This is problematic because failing to spay females can result in life-threatening illness, while neutering males reduces odor and aggression. Removal of the testes or ovaries removes hormonal influences that appear to affect the adrenal gland. In the absence of these influences, the adrenal glands may overproduce several sex hormones, causing a variety of clinical signs. In some cases, the overactive gland can eventually become cancerous. Genetics may also play a role in the development of adrenal gland disease.

Avian Fecal Testing

Gastrointestinal (GI) parasites are any parasites that live in the digestive tract of a host. A number of GI parasites can affect pet birds.

Avian Nutrition

It is a common misunderstanding that seeds are a sufficient diet for companion birds. After all, wild bird feeders are filled with seeds, right? However, while wild birds enjoy the seeds people provide, they also eat a wide variety of other foods, including plants, insects, nectar, and, for some species, other small animals. In the wild, the same is true for cockatiels, parakeets, macaws, and other parrots. In their natural setting, these birds consume an almost unbelievable variety of foods.

Avian/Exotic Anesthesia

Anesthesia is the use of medication to induce the loss of consciousness, a decreased sense of anxiety, or the loss of sensation of a specific part of the body. General anesthetics are medications that are used to prevent the awareness of painful or stressful procedures. Sedatives are used to calm a patient during a procedure. Local anesthetics are used to achieve decreased sensation in an area of the body where a procedure may induce pain. Birds, reptiles, and small mammals differ from other pets in that their metabolic rates vary from one species to the next and specific precautions need to be taken when administering anesthesia to these animals. Your veterinarian knows that some of these animals eliminate medications at different rates depending upon the size of the animal or its body temperature, thus, doses vary significantly among species. In addition, due to their small size or unique methods of maintaining normal body temperature (thermoregulation), some avian and exotic animals may have difficulty maintaining their body heat under anesthesia; therefore, steps must be taken to keep them at optimal body temperature.

Caring for African Grey Parrots

One of the most intelligent birds ever studied, the African grey parrot has an amazing ability to imitate human speech and precisely mimic sounds within the environment (for example, ringtones and doorbells). African grey parrots can be affectionate, entertaining, and rewarding companion animals; however, owners must be knowledgeable and conscientious to fully enjoy the qualities of

African grey parrots. These birds prefer a routine schedule and a stable environment within their enclosure, and they require a substantial amount of interactive time with their owners to develop a trusting, enjoyable relationship. Therefore, African greys may not be appropriate for people who work odd hours, travel frequently, or spend a substantial amount of time away from home.

Caring for Amazon Parrots

Amazon parrots are highly intelligent, very outgoing, and renowned talkers. They adapt well to captivity, adjusting easily to their cage or aviary (enclosure). However, Amazon parrots require a great deal of mental stimulation. Without the proper attention, social interaction, and toys, Amazon parrots can develop behavioral problems. People who are willing to devote a considerable amount of time to their parrot will have a delightful companion pet for many decades.

Caring for Aquatic Turtles

Although aquatic turtles are clean, quiet, and relatively easy to care for, they require a proper environment to stay healthy. Provide a clean cage, a good diet, and adequate heat and light, and your turtle should be a good companion for 20 to 30 years.

Caring for Ball Pythons

Ball pythons are among the most popular pet snakes. They are a good pet for first-time snake owners because they are docile and easy to care for. Housing for a ball python can vary from simple to elaborate. What's most important is that you follow the guidelines for care and check your snake often to ensure that he or she looks and acts healthy.

Caring for Bearded Dragons

A bearded dragon can be a good choice for a pet reptile. These charismatic lizards from Australia are friendly and relatively easy to care for. They grow up to two feet in length and can live up to 10 years. If they are fed and housed properly, they can provide many years of companionship.

Caring for Budgerigars

Budgerigars, which are often called budgies or parakeets (in the United States), are among the most popular pet birds in the world. These charismatic little companion animals are lovable and affectionate and can mimic human speech like larger parrots, although in a smaller voice. Budgies are easy to care for and tame (if acquired at a young age); therefore, they are considered an excellent choice for first-time bird owners.

Caring for Chinchillas

A chinchilla can be a delightful pet for the right owner. Chinchillas have delicate skeletons and love to chew on things like electrical cords, so a safe environment is essential. Keep your chinchilla's health on the right track with a healthy diet, lots of safe exercise, and regular veterinary care.

Caring for Cockatiels

A cockatiel is a small Australian parrot. If you prefer a small bird that may be more affectionate than a larger parrot, does not vocalize loudly, and requires less space, a cockatiel is an excellent choice. Cockatiels are prized throughout the world because of their loveable companionship qualities. They are gentle and easy to breed and enjoy interacting with humans. Cockatiels make soft chirping sounds, whistle (especially the males), and are generally less noisy than most other parrots. Cockatiels are easy to tame as well as inexpensive and simple to maintain; therefore, they are an excellent choice for first-time bird owners.

Caring for Ferrets

Ferrets are quiet, friendly, curious, and playful. They can be trained to come to an owner's call or a specific sound, such as the squeak of a toy.

Caring for Green Iguanas

Iguanas are among the most popular pet reptiles. They love to bask in the sun or under an ultraviolet light, and they enjoy a diet of leafy greens and vegetables. Many people don't realize that iguanas can grow to be quite large, exceeding 6 ft (1.8 m) in length. Iguanas should be properly socialized when they are young to ensure that they can be handled as adults. They require specialized housing and regular veterinary care and may not be a suitable pet for everyone.

Caring for Guinea Pigs

Mild-mannered and cute, guinea pigs can be great pets. They're fairly easy to care for, but they do require some special care as well as regular veterinary checkups, comfortable housing, and attention from their owners.

Caring for Hamsters

Hamsters are the most common pet rodent for several reasons. These curious, attractive, and clean little companions are interesting to observe. Hamsters can be a good first pet for children, are easy to care for, and are usually friendly. However, hamsters are nocturnal (most active at night) and have delicate bones that can break easily due to mishandling or falls.

Caring for Leopard Geckos

One of the most common pet lizards, the leopard gecko is hardy and friendly. It can vocalize, lick its eyes, and "wink" its ears. Leopard geckos have various colors and patterns, and their price varies according to their appearance. Housing and feeding a leopard gecko is relatively simple, but some guidelines must be followed to keep these geckos healthy.

Caring for Rabbits

A clean, roomy cage and a nutritious diet are important to keeping your rabbit healthy and happy. Also important is the time you spend interacting with your rabbit: a bored and lonely rabbit can become destructive and even aggressive. Providing the interesting surroundings and companionship that your rabbit needs can help him or her be well adjusted and affectionate.

Caring for Sugar Gliders

Sugar gliders have quickly become a popular pet in the United States because of their many good characteristics: they are clean, attractive, and relatively quiet. Their housing and dietary

requirements are reasonable. Sugar gliders are hardy and don't have a lot of health problems. However, before deciding to own a sugar glider, be sure you understand how much commitment and time are required.

Coping With the Loss of a Pet

Grief is a natural reaction to the loss of a pet. Regardless of whether the pet is old or young, or whether the loss is expected or sudden, family members and other people who were close to the pet will experience similar feelings when a beloved pet dies. These feelings, commonly called the five stages of grief, are the same as those experienced when a person passes away.

Examination and Rabies Vaccine

Regular physical examinations are essential to maintaining your pet's health. A thorough examination checks every major body organ and system.

Exotic Pet Fecal Testing

Gastrointestinal (GI) parasites include any parasites that live in the digestive tract of a host. A variety of GI parasites affect exotic pets such as rabbits, rats, mice, gerbils, hamsters, and guinea pigs. The most common GI parasites in these pets are pinworms, tapeworms, Giardia, and coccidian.

Explaining Pet Loss to Children

Our companion animals are often treasured members of the family, and we mourn for them when they die or are euthanized. It is important to recognize your feelings of loss and grief and to express them in your own way. In addition, when your child is attached to a pet that dies or is euthanized, it is important to recognize his or her feelings of loss and help your child express those feelings.

First Aid and Your Pet

Dealing with an injured pet can be scary and frustrating. In many cases, you don't know how bad the injury is, and your pet may not be acting normally. If your pet is injured, the first thing you need to do is try to remain calm. If possible, try to determine how severe the injury is, but remember that caution is extremely important when approaching an injured animal. Any pet, no matter how calm or friendly he or she may usually be, can bite or scratch when in pain.

Follow-up Examination

If your pet is being treated by a veterinarian, it's likely that you will be asked to return for a follow-up examination. This physical examination is usually scheduled a few weeks after the initial examination and may be done for a number of reasons.

Getting a Pet Sitter

It's important to have someone you trust care for your pet while you're away. Keeping your pet at home in the care of a pet sitter will spare your pet the stress and health risks associated with boarding facilities. A pet sitter will not only feed and play with your pet but also water plants, bring in the mail, and take out the trash. Some sitters may also perform grooming or behavior training. A pet sitter can help your home appear to be lived in, which can deter burglars. If you don't have a neighbor, friend, or relative who can care for your pet when you're away, consider hiring a

professional pet sitter. Knowing that your pet is being cared for by a professional pet sitter can add to your peace of mind while you're away.

Grooming Your Bird

Like most other pets, pet birds can benefit from regular grooming. But before you get started, there are a few things you should know.

Insulinoma in Ferrets

An insulinoma (also known as beta-cell carcinoma and islet cell carcinoma) is a tumor of the pancreas that causes an increase in the secretion of insulin, which leads to severely low blood sugar (hypoglycemia). Insulinomas are common in middle-aged to older ferrets, most commonly those aged 3 to 4 years and older. They can develop in both male and female ferrets.

Medication Monitoring

Medication monitoring can have many components. It can involve testing the levels of a drug in your pet's blood to ensure that those levels are high enough to be effective, but not too high (which may cause problems or side effects). It may include discussing your pet's medical history to help ensure that your pet is not experiencing any unwanted side effects from a medication. It may also involve having your veterinarian examine your pet periodically to ensure that the clinical signs associated with the illness being treated are responding appropriately to therapy.

Pet Toy Safety

Pet toys, whether homemade or purchased, can pose hazards to your pet, so it's important to know what the hazards are and how to avoid them. When possible, supervise your pet while he or she plays with a toy. In addition, help keep your pet safe by following these toy safety tips.

Polyomavirus Vaccine

Avian polyomavirus is a virus that primarily infects young, caged birds. While birds younger than 5 months are most susceptible to infection, it's possible for adult birds to become infected as well. Older birds that are infected may survive but shed the virus in feather dander and droppings, exposing other birds to infection.

Rabbit Nutrition

Rabbits make great pets: they are easy to keep; can be litterbox trained like cats; and can live a long, healthy life, providing many hours of enjoyment. The average life span of a domestic rabbit is 6 to 10 years. If kept outdoors, rabbits need to live in a secure location safe from predators. If rabbits are kept indoors, the house must be "bunny proofed" to remove items that rabbits could chew and destroy or that could be harmful, such as electrical cords. Rabbits need to be kept in a clean, climate-controlled environment with fresh water and good nutrition. Pet rabbits typically live longer than rabbits for commercial use, so the goals for feeding pet rabbits differ from those for production rabbits.

Rabies

Rabies is a deadly disease caused by a virus that attacks the central nervous system. All warm-blooded animals, including wild animals, dogs, cats, and humans, are susceptible to it. Once

clinical signs appear, rabies is generally fatal. However, the disease is also generally preventable through vaccination.

Radiography

A radiograph (sometimes called an x-ray) is a type of photograph that reveals the body's bones and internal organs. The procedure for obtaining a radiograph is called radiography. Radiography is a very useful diagnostic tool for veterinarians because it can help obtain information about almost any organ in the body, including the heart, lungs, and abdominal organs, as well as the bones.

The Importance of Ultraviolet (UV) Light for Reptiles

The sun gives off more than just visible light; it also emits light that we cannot see, such as ultraviolet (UV) radiation. UV light is a frequency of electromagnetic radiation that is higher than the violet spectrum of visible light but lower than x-rays.

The Wellness Examination

A wellness examination is a complete physical examination along with diagnostic testing that may include bloodwork, urinalysis, and checking a stool sample for parasites. In many cases, a wellness examination can help detect the early stages of disease. Often, your veterinarian will schedule this exam when your pet is due for vaccinations.

Your Pet's Prescribed Diet

If your pet is on a prescribed diet, keeping him or her on that diet is essential for the best possible health and quality of life. Your veterinarian has carefully selected your pet's prescribed diet based on his or her specific needs, so this food should not be changed.

