

## 10 Tips To Prevent Ferret Bites

**Use these 10 tips to stop your ferret from biting you or anyone else.**

*By Bob Church*

Posted: October 16, 2009, 8:15 p.m. EDT

Many cures exist to prevent ferret bites, perhaps as many as there are ferret owners. They can be broken into three areas: understanding need, bribes and friendship.

### Understanding A Ferret's Needs

1. Do not grab an aggressive or fearful ferret.
2. Allow the ferret to stay in control (give it its feet). Allow it to approach you, rather than forcing an introduction.
3. Always allow a ferret to make a "ferret introduction" prior to picking it up. Allow it to sniff your hand and fingers before lifting it.
4. Watch the body language; a ferret that does not want to be bothered will display it by hiding, retreating, swinging its head for a quick nip, and making the "defensive face" (ears retracted, eyes wide and mouth open). The play face has an open mouth, but also has normal eyes and forward ears.

### Bribing Ferrets

5. Favored treats can be used to entice a wary ferret from a hiding place, or to allow you to pick it up. Make sure you have plenty at first, but after the ferret has started to relax, cut back on the number of treats.
6. Liquid "licking food" is a great way to turn a bite into a lick. I prefer chicken baby food, which isn't sugary.

### Fostering A Ferret Friendship

7. Grooming: Facial and ear grooming with a damp washcloth (to simulate a mother ferret's grooming) works fantastically to turn biting into licking.
8. Fur plucking: This is a ferret-ferret behavior that promotes group (litter) unity. Just pluck the fur around the base of the tail and work toward the head. Ferrets love it!
9. Scruffing and saying "no" is actually very effective, because it simulates the normal "mother ferret" behavior. A gentle scruff while holding the ferret immobile teaches it how far it can go in play. Ferrets catch on to their limits very quickly.
10. Never use physical discomfort or pain to stop biting. Nose thumping, bitter apple, jaw squeezing and other discomfoting techniques generally teach a ferret to fear a person, not to trust them. If it means the difference between euthanizing a ferret and keeping it, less discomfoting methods can be used sparingly. Remember, a gentle hand raises a gentle ferret.