

## Protein Shakes And Ferrets

### Could the ingredients of a protein shake make a ferret ill?

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**Q:** I have a ferret named Marcello. As I was getting ready to hit the gym, I briefly left a shaker containing my chocolate protein shake on the table. My ferret got into it and started to drink it. Afterward, he started to throw up and had runny diarrhea. He threw up several times, and I am extremely concerned. Will this harm him in any way?

**A:** Without knowing what is in this protein shake, it is impossible to tell how dangerous this could be to your ferret. The easiest answer is that food or drink that is safe for people is not always safe for pets, including ferrets.

If there is real chocolate in this drink, the ingestion of chocolate by our pets is a common reason many end up in emergency rooms. One of the ingredients in chocolate can be fatal to our pets. Also, there are likely other ingredients that we would normally not allow ferrets to ingest in large quantities, including sugars, milk products, and vitamin and mineral supplements.

Your ferret's body did its best to get rid of these food items by vomiting, but the diarrhea could be a bigger concern. It could just be from ingesting a shake too rich for Marcello, or it could be much more serious. The diarrhea could be from bacterial overgrowth due to the nature of the shake or it could be organ disease, such as liver disease, from ingredients in the shake.

It is always best to call your veterinarian as soon as you know this type of ingestion occurred and seek his or her advice. Sometimes, waiting a few days for this to pass is appropriate and safe. Other times, based on what is in the drink, it is best to immediately go to your doctor's office and have the hospital perform emergency treatment on your ferret.