

Mysterious Scabs On Ferret

Disappearing and reappearing scabs on a ferret concern its owner.

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Q: I have a 4-year-old male ferret named Omcallie. For the past six months he has been getting weird scabs on his body. They come and go, and don't seem to bother him. He just gets them on his back and sides. I have observed him and what he does to see if he keeps getting hurt or something, but what I have seen is they just appear on his body. Is this serious? Should I be worried?

A: This is very unusual. Skin problems are difficult to diagnose at times because different diseases can look similar. But scabs that come and go are not typical of skin diseases.

In a multi-ferret household, the first thing to consider is fighting between ferrets. The healing scabs would be battle scars.

Assuming there are no other ferrets in your household, the most likely cause of the scabs is that Omcallie is scratching himself a lot. This may be going on when you are not watching. As he continues to scratch, he starts bleeding and then a scab forms.

Ferrets that itch like this could be suffering from one of several ailments, including mast cell tumors, adrenal gland disease, skin parasites or a reaction to something in the environment (this is the least likely cause). These are all very different problems. A visit to the veterinarian should give you an answer to this vexing problem.