

Ferrets Eating Bugs

Can a ferret get tapeworms from eating crickets or other insects?

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Q: We let our ferrets play in the basement and occasionally they come across a bug or two they both like to eat, mainly box elder bugs and crickets. Today, a friend said animals can get tapeworms from crickets. Is this true? Do we need to worry and, if so, is there anything to treat ferrets for tapeworms? Both our ferrets look and act fine.

A: Eating bugs and crickets is not a very healthy diet for a ferret. Our biggest fear is not parasites but pesticides. Homeowners and commercial entities frequently leave out and spray dangerous chemicals to rid their homes and businesses of bugs, so it is far more likely that a ferret will consume a bug that is toxic and even deadly due to these chemicals.

You may never know what chemical was on the bug that your ferret ingested, and your veterinarian has little chance of saving your ferret if it becomes ill. For these reasons, I do not recommend allowing ferrets to catch and eat bugs in the house.