

## Ferret With Pasteurella

### What causes Pasteurella in ferrets?

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**Q:** I have a female ferret that is spayed, and 4 years and 7 months old. She just came down with bacterial pneumonia. My vet said it is Pasteurella. I had tests done on Cassie's blood and heart. Everything is OK there. Cassie was placed in an oxygen tank for several days and given Baytril injections for one week. Now she is home and is on Clavamox. Cassie is improving. How could she have gotten this bacterium? I want to prevent this from happening again.

**A:** Pasteurella causing pneumonia is not common in ferrets at all. How was the diagnosis made? Was the organism recovered from the trachea or lungs? Actually, it is very uncommon for ferrets to have primary pneumonia. Pneumonia is an infection in the lungs. This is most commonly seen in ferrets secondary to canine distemper virus infection, which is not what your ferret has.

Pneumonia can also occur after a surgery and a ferret aspirates material from its mouth into the lungs. This is also a very unusual condition and does not sound like the case with your ferret.

So, what can this be? Like all animals, including people, it is possible for normal ferrets to get sick from an organism that is normally found in the environment or in their nasal cavity. I suspect there is a primary problem that has not been found yet. I would be concerned that this primary problem is causing immune suppression leading to pneumonia. One disease that rarely causes this is adrenal gland disease, but usually hair loss occurs with adrenal gland disease.

At this point, you may never know why your ferret developed this disease, but at least Cassie is improving. I would watch her very carefully to make sure she does not have a relapse nor shows signs of another disease.