

## Why Are These Ferrets Scratching So Much?

**How do you know if a ferret is scratching from dry skin or something else?**

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**Q:** I recently adopted four ferrets that were relinquished to our local pet store. They came in pretty bad shape, but they are now looking very healthy and recovering fine. They had fleas bad. I did everything that the store recommended and used the products the store recommended to relieve them, including treating carpets, furniture, bedding, etc. I now bathe them (it is very cold here now, snowing) once a week. I put on the flea spray once to twice a week. I also use a spray for dry skin and dry coat four times a week. They get vitamins once a week and eat a very nutritious diet.

I haven't seen any fleas or eggs for a while, but my ferrets are still scratching. I even use the ear drops for mites. Please help me figure out what is going on.

**A:** The best advice I can give you is for you to visit your veterinarian. Ferrets tend to be scratchers. They scratch more than dogs, cats or rabbits. Your ferrets' scratching might be normal, but it sounds like you know your ferrets and can determine normal from abnormal amounts of scratching.

If ferrets have had a large number of fleas and, therefore, flea bites, they may develop an allergy or hypersensitivity to the bite. It may be that there are just a few fleas left in the house, and these few fleas still bother the ferrets. Your veterinarian will be able to tell if there is a hypersensitivity to fleas in your ferrets. Your veterinarian also will be able to see if there are any more fleas.

Your veterinarian also has medication for various stages of the fleas' life and will be able to help you in a much more directed way to get rid of these fleas.