

Could Adrenal Ferret Be Depressed?

Is depression a sign of worsening adrenal gland disease?

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Q: I have a 5-year-old ferret. We did blood work on him in October 2008 and were told he showed signs of adrenal cancer. He does have a tumor that we brought way down in size using steroids. We took him off the steroids in December 2008 thinking he would have the surgery in January 2009. Then my fiancé and I decided to wait for the surgery.

In late April 2009, my ferret started to show signs of depression. He used to love going outside, but now lying in the grass is the only thing he wants to do. If we grab his favorite ball, he perks up and chases us. Once he gets his ball back he goes in his room (our spare room) and lies on the floor. Yesterday, he didn't want to play at all. I let him out of his cage and he went to the corner of the room and went back to sleep. I don't know what to do. This little guy means so much to me. Any suggestions?

A: The most important thing to do is to revisit your ferret's veterinarian. In older ferrets, problems change and occur at a rapid pace. Just because your ferret had only adrenal gland disease in the fall does not mean it's the only ailment he has now.

Your ferret is exhibiting classic signs of insulinoma disease. Your veterinarian can diagnose this with some further testing, including a blood test.

If this is not insulinoma but something else, such as early heart disease, this too can be diagnosed with a few more tests.

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