

Ferret Can't Keep Food Down

Why would a ferret throw up every time it eats?

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Q: I had a ferret given to me, I already own one! My ferret is active and plays by himself. The two fought a little, but the new guy is eating then throwing it up and eating the throw up. He also was looking disoriented and was just lying on the ground not moving. I know they sleep a lot, but this little guy really sleeps; keeps himself very warm. Could this just be a hairball? Please help. I love these animals and don't want to see him suffer.

A: The best advice I can give you is to visit your ferrets' veterinarian as soon as possible. There can be many causes for what you are seeing, but this is not something that can wait. If your ferret regurgitates (throws up) every time he eats, very soon he will become debilitated with the loss of nutrients. He will also lose fluids and electrolytes if he is regurgitating.

The cause for this problem may be easy to cure but if he becomes sick from the lack of food, you may have a much more serious problem to treat.

Usually, a hairball in a ferret does not cause what you are seeing. Not moving, being disoriented and sleeping may be signs of an insulinoma. These signs could also be the result of not being able to keep down food. An insulinoma needs to be treated either with medication or surgery. To give your ferret the best chance, this needs to be done as soon as possible.

If there is another disease causing the regurgitation, a visit to your veterinarian is the best way to determine what the problem is and how to treat it.

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