

Can Food Affect A Ferret's Size?

Why would adult ferrets be as small as baby ferrets?

By Karen Rosenthal, DVM, DABVP

Posted: August 1, 2010, 5 a.m. PDT

Q: I recently got three ferrets from a lady who had to get rid of them, because she did not have the time for them. She had put them on an organic ferret feed, but they had been given cat food while in the shelter and mostly while the lady had them. They would stash the food and not eat it, and so they got skinny. It's been a month, and they are still skinny. Even though they are 3 years old, they are as big as 3-month-old ferrets. Is their size something to worry about?

A: A 3-year-old ferret should not be as small as a 3-month-old ferret. It is very hard to say why these ferrets are so small. If the organic ferret food had the appropriate amounts and types of nutrients, then it should not have been the cause of the poor growth of these ferrets. And by the time the ferrets made it to the shelter, they should have been adult size, so the cat food should not have contributed to their small size.

A ferret as small as you describe either has a genetic disorder or was not fed appropriate nutrients when it was young. In both cases, the small size may just be one manifestation of the disease process. There may be other abnormalities that are present in your ferrets that are not easily seen.

Your veterinarian should examine each ferret. Through the physical exam and possibly other tests, your veterinarian should be able to tell you if there are other problems with your ferrets besides the small stature that you report.

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