

The Ferret Poop Chart

A guide to what different types of poop might indicate about a ferret's health.

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Normal Ferret Poop: This is what you want to see. Normal ferret poop is tubular in shape, has a smooth consistency and is tan-brown in color. (Click image to enlarge.)

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Green Ferret Poop: A very non-specific sign — it just means that food is moving through too fast. The normal brown color seen in feces is the end product of break down of old red blood cells. The pigment goes through a green stage called biliverdin before it becomes brown (called stercobilin). So if it goes through at an accelerated rate, it never breaks down all the way and has a green color to it. Anything that accelerates passage of food or causes diarrhea can result in green color — ECE, rapid food changes, lymphoma, just about anything. (Click image to enlarge.)

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Black Tarry Ferret Poop: Very suggestive of gastric bleeding and usually associated with gastric ulcers. You have to have significant bleeding in the stomach for the feces to turn black. The color is the result of digestion of blood, which usually only occurs in the stomach. (Click image to enlarge.)

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Bloody Ferret Poop: If you see fresh blood in the poop, it is usually either from the large bowel or rectum (if seen in small amounts). If there is a lot of blood, it could come from the entire length of the G.I. tract. Massive hemorrhage is seen either from severe gastric bleeds or shock in ferrets and, as one might imagine, is a really bad sign. (Click image to enlarge.)

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Birdseed-like Ferret Poop: Generally a sign of maldigestion or malabsorption. Also non-specific, it can be seen with any disease that severely affects the small intestine. Most commonly seen with ECE, the individual seeds are usually undigested fat and starch complexes. When you see this, consider removing a ferret from kibble and going to a bland, easily digested supplement for a while. (Click image to enlarge.)



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Pencil-lead Thin Ferret Poop: Think partial obstruction — usually a foreign body, like this popsicle stick. (Click image to enlarge.)

Dr. Bruce Williams is a recognized expert in the disease and pathology of the domestic ferret. He works at The Armed Forces Institute of Pathology in Washington, D.C.