

# Prescription Drugs Commonly Used in Ferrets

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This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of drugs which are commonly used in ferrets, but it will make you familiar with many drugs prescribed for ferrets by veterinarians. It is never wise to use a medication prescribed for another animal to treat a ferret that seems to have the same problem. The problem may not actually be the same, and dosages must be calculated on a body weight basis. Drug interactions can cause complex and sometimes harmful results in either sick or healthy animals. There are no drugs specifically labelled for use in ferrets.

Amoxicillin: Antibiotic, oral suspension is palatable and easy to give. Trade names of veterinary preparations of [amoxicillin](#) include Amoxi-Drops<sup>®</sup> (Pfizer), Biomox<sup>®</sup> (Delmarva), Robamox<sup>®</sup>-V (Fort Dodge) and a related drug, Clavamox<sup>®</sup> (Pfizer). Human pediatric formulations may also be used in ferrets. Used mainly for [respiratory infections](#) and gastric ulcers. May (rarely) cause [hypoglycemia](#), ferret may convulse or become very weak, give corn syrup if animal is conscious.

Baytril<sup>®</sup> (Bayer): familiar trade name for a veterinary preparation of [enrofloxacin](#), an antibiotic. Tablets and injectable, used for respiratory infections. Should not be given to rapidly growing animals, may interfere with bone development.

Cephalothins: Antibiotics. Oral suspensions are palatable and easy to give. There are several related [cephalosporins](#), e.g., cefadroxil, trade name Cefa-Drops<sup>®</sup> (Fort Dodge). Used for upper respiratory infections, mastitis, and other infections.

Chloramphenicol: Trade name Chloromycetin<sup>®</sup> palmitate (Monarch), oral suspension and injectable forms, an effective drug for [proliferative colitis](#). Generally safe in ferrets, rarely induces hypoglycemia, BUT VERY DANGEROUS FOR SOME PEOPLE, CAUSING POTENTIALLY FATAL BONE MARROW APLASIA: USE CAUTION WHEN DOSING YOUR FERRET, AVOID SKIN CONTACT.

Diazoxide: Oral suspension, trade name Proglycem<sup>®</sup>. Used to block the action of insulin in ferrets with inoperable [insulinomas](#). Very expensive.

Ear medications: [Antibiotic/steroid ear medications](#) e.g.; Panalog<sup>®</sup> (Fort Dodge), Otomax<sup>®</sup> (Schering-Plough), and other trade names. Oily, yellow suspensions used to treat ear and skin infections. Contains antibiotics and cortisone, should never be used in a pregnant jill, as cortisone is absorbed through the skin and could cause birth defects or abortion.

Gentamicin: Gentocin<sup>®</sup> (Schering-Plough) and other brands. [Gentamicin](#) should NEVER BE GIVEN TO A FERRET, even low doses may induce FATAL KIDNEY DAMAGE in sick animals. ALSO CAUSES DEAFNESS IN FERRETS.

GnRH (gonadotrophin releasing hormone): e.g.; Cystorelin<sup>®</sup> (Merial) and Factrel<sup>®</sup> (Fort Dodge), and HCG (human chorionic gonadotrophin). Injectable hormones used to induce ovulation in jills. HCG may induce allergic reactions and will become ineffective if used several times in the same animal. Neither drug will work until the jill has been in heat for 10 days.

Metronidazole: Tablets, trade name Flagyl<sup>®</sup> (Searle), have to be ground up to get the proper dose for a ferret. A liquid suspension is also available. Both forms of [metronidazole](#) have a very bitter taste that makes this drug hard to give. Used for gastritis and ulcers caused by [Helicobacter mustelae](#), and for [giardiasis](#).

Mitotane: Capsules, trade name Lysodren<sup>®</sup> (Bristol-Meyers Squibb). [Mitotane](#) is used for inoperable [benign adrenal tumors](#). Cannot be used in ferrets with insulinomas as it aggravates hypoglycemia.

Pepto Bismol: [Pepto Bismol<sup>®</sup> \(Procter and Gamble\) is used as a suspension for diarrhea, especially caused by gastritis or ulcers. CONTAINS SALICYLATES WHICH CAN BE TOXIC. Ferret should not get more than 8 mg/lb body weight daily.](#)

Prednisolone: [Prednisolone](#) tablets and syrups such as Pediapred<sup>®</sup> (Medeva), Prelone<sup>®</sup> (Muro) contain a steroid similar to cortisone, used to stabilize blood sugar in ferret with insulinomas, to treat [lymphosarcoma](#) and [eosinophilic gastroenteritis](#), and after adrenal gland surgery.

Tetracycline: Oral suspension, trade names of [tetracycline](#) include Panmycin Aquadrops<sup>®</sup> (Pharmacia and Upjohn), used for respiratory and skin infections. CAN DAMAGE THE TOOTH ENAMEL OF KITS UNDER 11 WEEKS, MAY INTERFERE WITH BONE GROWTH, SHOULD NOT USE IN PREGNANT JILLS.

Trimethoprim Sulfa: Oral pediatric antibacterial suspension of a [sulfur-containing antibiotic](#) that is palatable and easy to give. Trade names include Septra<sup>®</sup> (Monarch), Bactrim<sup>®</sup> (Roche), many others. Used for bladder infections, respiratory infections, skin infections including mastitis, and [coccidiosis](#).