

# ADRENAL DISEASE

The adrenal gland is a crucial part of the body that releases cortisol during stressful situations and regulates blood sugar, the immune system, and sex hormones. If a ferret's adrenal gland gets too large due to excessive growth, a benign tumor, or cancer, it can induce too many sex hormones to be produced. This causes serious issues that can affect not only a ferret's comfort and health but also their habits and behavior. There is no cure for adrenal disease, but a special implant that helps to regulate hormones can be used to provide a long, happy life.

## CAUSE

Adrenal disease occurs when the adrenal gland becomes overactive, enlarged, or when a tumor or cancer is present on the adrenal gland. Without surgical biopsy or gland removal, determining which is the cause may be difficult or impossible.

## SYMPTOMS

It is really important to be aware of and watch for any symptoms of adrenal disease and report them to your vet as soon as you notice them. The sooner treatment is started, the lower the chance of additional symptoms occurring. Symptoms include:

- hair loss (alopecia), especially starting with the tail and rump
- pruritus (itchiness)
- lethargy
- swelling of the vulva in females
- enlarged prostate or difficulty urinating in males
- anemia
- aggression
- weight loss
- increased sexual aggressiveness such as mounting

## DIAGNOSIS

Adrenal disease must be diagnosed by your veterinarian. This is done by reviewing clinical signs, running a blood test called an adrenal panel, or performing an ultrasound. In some cases, more than one diagnostic tool is used.



# ADRENAL DISEASE

## TREATMENT

Once a diagnosis has been confirmed, your veterinarian may discuss with you your options of either using an implant to control the disease or surgical treatment to remove one or both of the adrenal glands. The implant is placed via injection between the shoulder blades. Surgery is typically done as a last resort if the implant is not successful in maintaining or reversing your ferret's symptoms.

## PREVENTION

It is really important to be aware of and watch for any symptoms of adrenal disease and report them to your vet immediately. Annual implants during your ferrets yearly wellness exam are generally recommended. Speak with your vet to decide what is best for you and your ferret.



© Can Stock Photo / adogslifephoto

All information shared by MN Pocket Pet Rescue is researched, up to date, and accurate to the best of our ability. We are not a licensed veterinary organization and do not intend to present ourselves as such. All educational material contains our best recommendations for care specific to each species. However, all animals are different and some may have unique needs. MN Pocket Pet Rescue does not assume any liability for the well-being of any animal not under our care. Always use your best judgment and follow veterinary recommendations whenever necessary. If you have any questions or find inaccurate information please contact us.

