

Insulinoma

Insulinoma - Pancreatic neuroendocrine carcinoma is one of the most common tumours diagnosed in ferrets. The tumours grow on the pancreas, causing excess insulin to be produced (benign or malignant). As insulin is over produced, this causes blood sugar to fall, this disease is most seen in ferrets of 3years +.

Symptoms include: lethargy, loss of appetite, hind end weakness and seizures.

Treatment for insulinoma can include: surgery to remove as much as the tumours as possible and steroid medication; Prednisone and Diazoxide. Diet management is a must with insulinoma ferrets as they need to eat small meals at least every 4 hours.

Adrenal Disease

Adrenal disease - Hyperadrenocorticism is a disease common in middle age ferrets causing the adrenal gland to over produce a range of hormones; sex hormones and cortisol.

Symptoms include: lethargy, weakness, hair loss (typically between the shoulders and at the base of the tail), vulva swelling in females (spay females and not in breeding season), aggression and mating behaviours in castrated males.

Treatment for adrenal disease includes: the suprelorin implant every 6months – 1 year or Lupron injections yearly.

Lymphoma

Lymphoma - Lymphosarcoma can happen anywhere throughout the body in the lymph nodes. Many organs can be involved in this disease, making treatment dependent on where this is found in the body.

Symptoms include: loss of appetite, weight loss, lumps under the skin (swollen lymph nodes), diarrhoea and blood in faeces and enlarged spleen.

Treatment includes: surgery for solitary masses, supportive care, Steroid medication or chemotherapy

ECE

ECE - Epizootic catarrhal enteritis is a highly contagious viral infection. ECE is species specific and can pass through direct contact or through contact with infected clothes, shoes, medical instruments etc. Ferret with the virus need to be isolated away from other. PPE and hygiene practices should be carried out. The virus causes damage to the villi in the intestines, making it hard for the body to absorb the nutrients from food.

Symptoms include: Green slimy poos, Lethargy, loss of appetite, weight loss and weakness.

Treatment includes: Supportive treatment to alleviate symptoms. Some of these include, Fluids, Syringe feeding a bland diet, ect.

Being a viral infection, antibiotics are not typically used, however they can be given to stop any further infections coming in while the immune system is fighting the disease.

Flu

Flu – ferrets are susceptible to multiple strains of influenza. It is zoonotic (passed between human and ferret). Like in humans, it is passed through coughing and sneezing as well as being airborne.

Symptoms include: Coughing, sneezing, lethargy, loss of appetite, fever and discharge from eyes and nose.

Treatment – this includes supportive treatment such as syringe feeding, fluids. Antibiotics can be given if a secondary infection sets in like pneumonia.

Covid- 19

Covid 19 – SARS-CoV-2 is a highly contagious zoonotic virus. It can be passed from human to ferret.

Symptoms - While many can have the virus and be asymptomatic, many do suffer with symptoms such as fever, lethargy, loss of appetite.

Treatment – this includes supportive treatment such as syringe feeding, fluids. Antibiotics can be given if a secondary infection sets in like pneumonia.