

# INSULINOMA

Insulinoma is a condition caused by increased secretions of insulin produced by the pancreas. This causes serious issues that can affect not only a ferret's comfort and health but also their habits and behavior. Although there is no cure for insulinoma, it can be managed with a proper diet and regular monitoring of blood glucose levels. With these management tools, your ferret can still enjoy a long, happy life.

## CAUSE

Insulinoma is caused by tumors on the pancreas causing an increased secretion of insulin leading to severely low blood sugars.

## SYMPTOMS

Symptoms of insulinoma may be intermittent with normal levels of activity between symptomatic episodes. Symptoms include:

- pawing at the mouth
- stargazing
- weakness (often seen in the hind end)
- weight loss
- tremors
- depression
- abnormal behavior
- lethargy
- confusion
- low blood glucose levels

## DIAGNOSIS

Your veterinarian will perform a blood test to check your pet's blood sugar and insulin levels. If the results show a low blood sugar level with a high insulin level, your ferret may have insulinoma.



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## TREATMENT

Ferrets with insulinoma are often prescribed the steroid prednisolone. Unfortunately, this does not prevent the continued growth of tumors but has been shown to help reduce clinical signs. A strict feeding schedule and properly timed medications can help maintain the comfortability of your ferret. A surgery that involves removing a section of the pancreas is another possible treatment. This option is not possible for all ferrets and should be discussed with your vet to weigh the risks and rewards.

In cases of emergency, if a ferret has a sudden drop in insulin levels, honey or corn syrup can be rubbed into the ferret's gums and immediate veterinary care should be sought.

## PREVENTION

You can help prevent insulinoma in ferrets by feeding them a proper diet and monitoring your ferret's blood glucose levels. Blood tests should be performed a minimum of once a year during your ferret's wellness exam; however, testing every three to six months is generally recommended.



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