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Insulinoma In Ferrets

Your ferret has been diagnosed with insulinoma, a tumor of the pancreas that secretes too much insulin. This causes your ferret's blood sugar to drop, which can be life threatening. Insulinomas are treatable, but not curable. Ferrets respond well to prednisilone, which raises the blood sugar, but has no effect on the tumor. Most ferrets live 6 months to 2 years after diagnosis.

It is important for your ferret to receive prednisilone every 12 hours for the rest of it's life! The dose will need to be increased over time as the tumor grows and excretes more insulin.

- Do not ever decrease the amount of pred you are giving.
- Don't hesitate to *increase the dose of pred* if your ferret exhibits signs of low blood sugar

Signs of low blood sugar may include any of the following symptoms:

- Sleeps more than previously.
- Tires more easily. "Flattens out" more than usual when playing.
- Periods of inability to use rear legs.
- Weight loss.
- Intermittent loose stool or diarrhea.
- Glassy-eyed appearance, spacey.
- In severe cases, seizures and screaming episodes may occur.

When episodes of low blood sugar occur, you may feed your ferret a treat. If he/she is very lethargic, or on the verge of a seizure, give them ferretvite or rub honey or pancake syrup on their gums. Thereafter, increase the pred by at least 0.3cc per dose! There is no dose that is too high though most ferrets have poor quality of life by the time you are giving 1.5 to 2.0cc twice daily. This is due to the effects of the tumor, not the pred. Remember, if in doubt—always give MORE prednisilone.

Ingestion of carbohydrates causes the pancreas to secrete insulin. Carbohydrates are a necessary part of ferret's diet, but it is wise to increase their intake of proteins and fat.

Suggested foods include: chicken, chicken/meat baby food, ferretone, whipping cream (packaged like half and half), cooked or scrambled eggs. Some ferret's refuse new foods so don't drive yourself crazy trying to make him/her eat them. Foods to avoid include: treats made with sugar, ferretvite, fruits, etc.

Please don't hesitate to call us if you have any questions or concerns!

Insulinoma Diet for Ferrets

Ingredients:

Totally ferret: ½-¾ cup
Ultra Blend Ferret Food (canned): 1 can
Heavy Whipping Cream: ½-¾ cup
Egg Yolks: 2

Preparing Instructions:

Grind Totally Ferret into a fine powder; mix in can of Ultra Blend, whipping cream and egg yolks. Blend until creamy.

***Any of the above ingredients can be used separately to supplement your ferret's diet, including egg whites (many ferrets love scrambled eggs!)