

## Evergreen Avian & Exotic Animal Hospital

Holly G. Carter, BVetMed

12930 NE 125h Way, Ste B130, Kirkland, WA 98034

Ph: 425-821-6165 Fax: 425-821-6130

info@evergreenae.com

[www.exopet.com](http://www.exopet.com)

### Mast Cell Tumors in Ferrets

-Cathy A. Johnson-Delaney, DVM

Mast cell tumors are usually small, benign skin tumors in ferrets. They can appear anywhere on the body. They appear as a small (less than 1 cm usually) reddish, slightly raised mass. Occasionally if the surface has been scratched they may ulcerate and even become infected. Some have a small amount of darkish pigment. They may wax and wane – seem to spontaneously disappear and reappear. Most of the time the ferret is unaware the bump is there. Occasionally they might itch as they release histamine.

**Signs:** small reddish to raised bump occurring anywhere on the body. The surface may become ulcerated and secondarily infected. Some itch and the ferret may act like it is uncomfortable. Most seem to be incidental findings. The lesions may wax and wane in appearance.

**Diagnosis** is made by history and appearance. Gentle scraping of the surface with cytology will show mast cells. Full diagnosis is made with histopathology after the tumor's removal. (there are other small skin tumors in ferrets that may look the same).

**Treatment** is aimed at decreasing the histamine production and stopping the itching (if present). Treatment by excision of the mass is done for those that have become large and/or ulcerated or bothering the ferret. First aid to decrease the irritation of the mass can be done by applying Benadryl cream several times a day. Healx soother cream also decreases inflammation and itching.