

Why are my rabbit's chin and feet wet?

If you notice that your rabbit's chin/dewlap is wet, this could be a sign of dental disease, your pet could be overheating or there might be a foreign body in the mouth. Typically, excessive salivation can be an indication of tooth problems. Rabbits' teeth continually grow and sometimes the teeth experience abnormal wear during the grinding of food. If this continues, the teeth can overgrow and cause pain when chewing. Also, sometimes their teeth can be so uncomfortable that they wipe their mouths excessively, in which case you might notice wet feet. If this is the problem, it is usually necessary for a veterinarian to trim or grind the tooth surfaces down to a normal level. To prevent future problems we recommend offering a diet consisting primarily of hay and greens/veggies with a small amount of pellets.

Why is my rabbit, chinchilla or guinea pig having eye discharge?

Normal, healthy eyes will be open, bright and clear, with tears being naturally produced by glands surrounding the eyes. Tears will normally flow from around the surface of the eye and drain through tear ducts into the nasal passages.

Any deviation from the norm might be a cause for concern. Eye discharge can be an indication of a number of things. Crusty eyes and nasal discharge could be a sign of an upper respiratory infection and medications might be necessary for treatment. It is also possible that your pet has a blocked tear duct. This backup of tears can occur because of root intrusion or the skull is slightly misshapen causing a narrowing of this duct. Sometimes it is necessary for a veterinarian to flush the tear ducts to help restore tear drainage. In extreme circumstances root intrusion may perhaps be the culprit, which can be identified on x-ray. A dental might be necessary in an attempt to restore the grinding surfaces of the teeth and hopefully the overall health of your pet's mouth.

Also, you might notice a milky looking liquid being expressed from your guinea pig's eye. This is normal and results from the grooming processes and usually gets wiped away with their front feet.

Why is my pet rodent scratching itself raw?

When a rodent is scratching itself, it could have something as simple as dry skin or something more serious. It is possible that your pet could be infested with lice or mites. Lice can be visible along the base of the hair. They are typically species specific, but washing your hands after handling your pet is good practice to avoid any potential problems. With a mite infestation, their skin can look raw or scaly and can be very itchy. Mites cannot be seen with the naked eye and a skin scraping might be necessary for diagnosis. There is also a possibility that your pet could have ringworm. Despite its name, ringworm is not a worm. It is a fungal infection of the skin, that can be extremely contagious (to people too). If you are concerned about any of these, your pet should be seen for diagnosis and to begin treatment.

Why do I need to give my guinea pig Vitamin C?

Most animals can synthesize their own vitamin C, which is why it is not necessary for additional intake, but like humans and other primates, piggies cannot make their own. We share a gene

mutation that makes it impossible to synthesize, so it is necessary to include it in a carefully planned diet.

It is recommended to offer vitamin C fortified pellets made especially for guinea pigs. Pay attention to the 'born on' date on the package as vitamin C will degrade over time (in about 90 days) and will lose its potency. The pellets should also be balanced with a variety of fruits and vegetables containing Vitamin C. Kale, parsley, red peppers, broccoli and cauliflower are a few items that contain natural Vitamin C. There are other ways to supplement your pet as well. Giving vitamin C drops in the water (according to the directions on the bottle) are a good option, but be careful, as it can sometimes change the taste of the water causing your pet to refuse water. Vitamin C tablets are an excellent choice for piggies that are willing to be hand fed.

An adult piggie should receive about 20-25mg/day. Guinea pigs that do not receive enough will suffer from vitamin C deficiency, which in humans is known as scurvy. They can become lethargic, have a lack in appetite or trouble warding off infections and even lose their teeth. So, be sure to offer a variety of healthy options and your piggie will thank you!

Why is my ferret losing hair?

Hair loss in ferrets can be an indication of adrenal gland disease where loss along the tail, rump, flanks or chest is the most common clinical sign. The adrenal glands are found in front of each kidney and secrete various hormones like adrenaline, cortisol, estrogen and testosterone.

Adrenal gland disease occurs when the cells in the gland begin to grow abnormally and cause an overproduction of sex steroid hormones. This can cause enlarged prostates in males and they might have difficulty urinating. In females, you may see a swollen vulva. In some cases itchy skin may also be noted.

Overall, there are a few possible causes of adrenal disease. Plus, it is likely that some pets are simply genetically predisposed. It is also possible that spaying/neutering at an early age (before the first heat cycle in females) can contribute. Having more than 8 to 10 hours of daylight per day can increase that amount of circulating hormones, which also may increase the risk of adrenal disease.

If you notice prolonged hair loss in your ferret, it is recommended that you schedule an exam. Blood work and ultrasound might be necessary for diagnosis. It is common that ferrets with this disease have other health problems as well, so having him/her seen would be a good next step.

Does my ferret need vaccines?

Yes. Annual vaccinations for Distemper and Rabies are necessary for your pet ferret.

Canine Distemper Virus (CDV) is contagious and can be transmitted by infected dogs, foxes, raccoons and other infected ferrets. It is even possible to bring it home if you have come in contact with infected objects/substances. Using the Distemper vaccine for dogs is NOT recommended; only the Ferret Distemper vaccine should be used. There is always the possibility that the vaccine can cause an allergic reaction, so when you schedule an appointment bear in mind that we commonly administer an additional antihistamine injection to combat a possible reaction.

The Rabies Virus is shed in saliva and can be transmitted through a bite wound or by simply coming in contact with infected saliva. Rabies is an incredible health risk for humans as well, therefore annual vaccination of your ferret is highly recommended.

How much should I feed my rabbit, guinea pig, or chinchilla?

The rabbit, guinea pig, and chinchilla dental growth and gastrointestinal system had been adapted to consuming and digesting a high fiber diet. Their teeth grow continuously and must be worn down by chewing fiber every day. The fiber they eat helps their intestines and cecum digest their food by aiding motility and feeding the normal gut flora. We recommend unlimited Timothy or Grass hay (not Alfalfa) and salads of leafy greens every day. Please limit the amount of pellets provided to your pet to decrease the chance of dental overgrowth or gastrointestinal disease.

How do I disinfect my pet's cage?

The following is recommended for most cages. When it is cage-cleaning time, place your pet in a temporary cage with food and water, away from any cleaning fumes. Remove and discard any soiled organic materials, like cardboard, newspaper, wood, shavings, natural toys, food items, rope or wood perches. Use soap (Dawn) and water to remove any dirt and debris from the cage, tank or kennel. Some toys and bowls are dishwasher safe and can be cleansed in the dishwasher instead. Mix a solution of 10% bleach (1 part bleach into 9 parts water). Soak or wipe down all appropriate items and surfaces with this. Let dilute bleach sit for 15 minutes before completely rinsing. Be sure all residue is rinsed away as bleach can be toxic to some pets. Place in direct sunlight to dry or let dry overnight. Set up your pet's cage again and enjoy! Repeat this process about 1-2 times a month and don't forget to do a general cleaning of food and water dishes once a day.