

Ferret Biting

A lot of ferrets bite just out of playfulness or not knowing any better. When they play with another ferret, they can bite and do it pretty hard. They have to be taught that this is not appropriate to do with humans. This is, of course, a little more difficult to do with a deaf ferret.

First thing is to be aware when you are around the ferret for actions that lead up to biting. For example, I had a ferret that would always lick twice before biting (as do a lot of ferrets). I had another that would come up and sniff first before biting. If you can recognize some of the actions, you can take pre-emptive measures to keep the biting from occurring.

Be sure the ferret is not hungry. A ferret should have food down at all times. Ferrets can be very picky about the food they eat, so make sure the ferret is eating nearly a bowlful of food a day. If it isn't, it's probably not eating enough because it doesn't like the food.

If you see that the ferret is acting like it is going to bite, move the ferret away from you or move yourself slowly away from the ferret. If you move away quickly, the ferret will think it is a game and want to bite even more.

Until the ferret no longer bites, do not roughhouse, play chase or anything else that will make the ferret more likely to bite. The ferret must first learn to play nicely.

When the ferret does bite, take the ferret by the scruff of the neck, say no (but not yelling) and place it away from you. A mother ferret will scruff a baby ferret when it is misbehaving, so that's what you're doing. Don't yell at, shake or hit the ferret, because this can cause more biting and even aggressiveness. If the ferret tries to bite again within a short time (like a few minutes), scruff it and put it in a different area. If it happens again, scruff it and put it in the cage, but only for a minute or two. They usually get the picture very quickly when they get confined to the cage. If the biting persists, confine to the cage for five minutes. (Any longer than five minutes and the ferret has no idea why it's in the cage.)