

Ask the Vet



Deborah Cowan, DVM

Doctor Deborah Cowan graduated from NCSU-CVM in 1993. She has been working with Exotic animals since 1982 when she went to NC A&T University for her BA in Lab Animal Science. She was part of the group that started the Wildlife Rehabilitation League in 1978. She has done a month long internship at Texas A&M, Galveston campus in Fish Medicine.

Q What is considered an Exotic Pet?

A Unlike popular opinion, it is not a lion, tiger or bear; they are ferrets, rabbits, small pocket pets, fish, birds, reptiles, amphibians and the like.

Q Do Exotic pets require vaccinations?

A Some Exotics, like ferrets are required to get a rabies vaccine every year. Most exotic pets should have a yearly veterinary exam to ensure that they are in good health. Like people, any pet can develop kidney, liver, pancreatic, diabetic or cancer problems. A yearly exam can help catch problems in the early stages.

Q What are some of the problems that Exotic pets can have?

A Many Exotic pets develop nutritional problems because owners do not have any idea how to feed them properly. Often an owner depends on the pet store or the Internet to help them with nutrition. The veterinarian is really your best source for nutritional information.

Q What are some of the procedures Exotic pets can have?

A Like any pet, radiographs (xrays) are often done to determine if there are broken bones, or internal abnormalities. Blood work is done to check how the organs or the blood is doing. Urinalysis are done to determine if pets have kidney problems or urinary tract problems.

Q How do I know if my Exotic pet is sick?

A Often people wait too long to take an exotic pet to the veterinarian. Animals are very good about hiding illnesses. If your pet is not behaving normally, not eating, not drinking or going to the bathroom - GO to the veterinarian. Often, if we see the pet early in the disease we can save them without you spending a fortune. Call.

- Doctor Cowan has been a member of the House Rabbit Society since 1990.
- Association of Reptile and Amphibian Veterinarians since 1988.
- The Ferret Society since 1993.
- She is a member of the NCVMA and AVMA
- Dr. Cowan learned about Birds from Avian Specialists, Dr. Carmen Lindheimer and Dr. Kevin Flammer.
- She has worked on animals as diverse as \$10,000 Koi and on small green tree frogs.

Animal medicine and care define her. Doctor Cowan is the owner of Animal Hospital of Walnut Cove and has been treating and helping exotic pets since 1993.

Animal Hospital of Walnut Cove

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