

"The antibiotics penicillin, amoxicillin, amoxicillin/clavulanic acid, ampicillin, clindamycin, cephalosporin, streptomycin, lincomycin and erythromycin should never be used in these species"

Hamsters

There are various species of hamster that can be owned as pets – the most common species being the golden/Syrian hamster (*Mesocricetus auratus*). Others include the Russian hamster (*Phodopus sungorus*), Roborowskii Russian hamster (*Phodopus*

roborowskii) and the Chinese hamster (*Cricetulus griseus*). They come in various colourations, live for 1.5 to two years and, generally speaking, unless poorly handled or scared, they will rarely bite. Hamsters are solitary species – consequently they will fight and cause

Condition	Description	Clinical signs	Diagnosis	Treatment/prognosis
Hyperadrenocorticism (Cushing's disease)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> caused by adrenocortical hyperplasia or adenoma more similar to canine than ferret hyperadrenocorticism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PU/PD, polyphagia, alopecia hyperpigmentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> elevated ALP elevated plasma cortisol levels enlarged adrenals on US/ exploratory surgery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> mitotane at 5mg PO every 24 hours for 30 days – treatment, however, is often not effective
Cutaneous lymphoma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> very common neoplasia of hamsters predominantly presents in adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> anorexia, weight loss, alopecia, scabs, exfoliative erythroderma 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cytology or histopathology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no recognised treatment euthanasia when quality of life is questionable
Pyometra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> common and fatal if not treated promptly shouldn't be confused with normal oestrous discharge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vaginal discharge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cytology to confirm clinical signs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> swift surgical intervention – ovariectomy limited information available on medical treatment effectiveness
Polycystic disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> different organs can be affected, mainly the liver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> abdominal distention dyspnoea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ultrasonography radiography 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> therapy is mostly palliative drainage of the cysts, performed under general anaesthesia for safety will reoccur again in two to four weeks

Table 3. Common infectious conditions seen in hamsters



Figure 4. Abdominal distention in a gerbil as a result of bilateral ovarian cysts – on post-mortem, neoplasia was also implicated.



Figure 5. A hamster with a *Trichophyton mentagrophytes* infection. The lesions started on the ears and progressed to the face, scrotum and feet.