

Pocket Pet General Health Assessment Form

Case # _____ ID # _____ Holding Pen # _____ Other # _____

Investigating Agency _____

Location of exam	Examination date	Examination time
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Animal:

Name	Species	Breed
Gender	Age	Weight
Color/Markings	Description	Temperament
Temperature	Pulse	Respiration

External Comments:

Coat should be shiny, full, lustrous and cover all parts of the body (except on foot pads in rodents - note: rabbits do not possess footpads). Watch for: painful abrasions, bald patches, matted oily areas (as in chinchilla or degu), thinning areas of fur, severely matted fur, bite wounds, alopecia, ringworm, self-trauma, obvious external ectoparasites (fleas, ticks, mites or cuterebrae larvae vent holes accompanied by large, itchy bump), redness, skin swellings, fur chewing or barbering by aggressive cage mates, irritation, pus filled abscesses or other abnormalities. (In unsanitary environments, mite infestation in rodents is extremely common and very contagious between cage mates). Poor coat quality is also an indication of malnutrition. In rabbits, watch for mite infestation in the form of white, scaly, dandruff flakes (*cheyletiella parasitovorax*) which is highly contagious and can spread to dogs and cats as well as other rabbits

Eyes Comments:

Should be bright, clear and alert. Pupil should dilate naturally. Watch for: injury, cloudiness, corneal ulcers, discharge either clear or pus encrusted, scratches on eye surface, soreness, entropion (eyelashes inverted scraping on surface of eye), injuries from fighting, blindness, signs of pain. *Note: in rats, eyes can appear like they are bleeding red tears - this is known as "chromodacryorrhea" - is a disorder usually from stress. All eyes in rabbits and rodents are very sensitive to sunlight or very bright light.



Ears Comments:

Should be uniformly covered with fur on outside, good condition and should be pink, clear and clean, odor-free. Skin, cartilage should be free of tears or wounds. Watch for: excessive wax buildup in ear canal, mite infestation (dark, odorous and filthy, bloody crusts), tears or fresh wounds, discharge, shaking of head or excessive scratching. Always check for a tattoo or ID.

Overall Body Check Comments:

Check the animal for body movement to see that all limbs are moving properly with no sign of neuromuscular abnormalities, that balance is normal, there is no paralysis (either partial or full), breaks or fractures, head tilt, all front paws and back feet are free from injury or torn, broken, or long nails. Check to make sure that the genital area is free of fecal debris, discharge, urine scald, fly strike, rectal prolapse (as seen in some tiny pocket pets, usually hamsters), bald and sore patches, rashes, disease or diarrhea which is serious in small pocket pets and rabbits. Check genitals for identifying sex or abnormalities (vent disease, viral/bacterial infections or fly strike). In many of the smaller rodents as well as guinea pigs, the testicles are inside the body wall and will appear as large bumps on either side of the anus/penis area. Rabbits exhibit scrotal sacs (outside the body wall) on either side of the penis/anal area. In smaller pocket pets check tail for breaks or tail-slip (partial tail or pieces broken off). Check also for hair rings around the penis in some pocket pets which must be corrected, especially in chinchillas. Check overall body condition for emaciated condition or distended abdomen; check abdominal, lung sounds with stethoscope (for possible pneumonia).

Nasal Area Comments:

Check nasal area for discharge especially around nostrils, rashes, bumps or lumps, tears or bite wounds, soreness (as can be seen in gerbils from facial eczema or nasal dermatitis) and respiratory tract for wheezing, labored breathing and congestion of rattling. Should be breathing clearly without labor, rattling or obvious discharge. Check inside of paws for dried discharge as well.

Internal Comments:

Droppings should be solid and uniform and urine output normal. Watch for: diarrhea, wet-tail in hamsters, blood present in urine or stool, parasite overload, pregnancy, lactation or mastitis, unusual lumps or bumps, fractures or breaks in bones. Consider fecal flotation test for internal parasites if budget allows it. Gastrointestinal upset can usually be managed introducing a slow, balanced diet over time when treating a malnourished animal. Have veterinarian palpate for unusual masses anywhere in the body.

Other Areas Comments:

Mouth area, check teeth for malocclusion (condition when teeth do not match up and overgrowth has occurred), jaw abscesses. In smaller rodents, teeth that are normally long could be misinterpreted as maloccluded. Yellowed teeth are also normal in most rodents. Have a veterinarian who is experienced in examining smaller pocket pets to check. Maloccluded teeth are more common in rabbits and guinea pigs than any other smaller animal. Nails on all animals should be clipped as soon as time allows. They can get caught in cage wire or flooring and can break or tear off causing bleeding and pain. Check footpads on all



rodents for abnormalities (sore hocks, abrasions or injury), especially "bumblefoot" in guinea pigs (abnormal enlargement in area of the foot). Take temperature if needed and weigh animal, to assess improvement over time.

Overall condition: Excellent Good Fair Poor Inhumane

General comments: _____

Actions taken or recommendations: _____

Examined by: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Phone Type (Cell/Home/Work): _____

