

Veterinary Allergy & Skin Center
5609 SW 64th Street
Gainesville, FL 32608
352-331-4233

Diane T. Lewis, DVM
Diplomate, American College of
Veterinary Dermatology

FOOD ELIMINATION DIETS

We are concerned that your pet may be allergic to an ingredient in food, treats, or medications. Although blood tests are available for food allergies, these tests are NOT accurate in diagnosing food allergies in animals. **The only way to rule in a food allergy** is to feed a prescription or homemade diet with a new protein and carbohydrate source. It is NOT important that your pet eat a grain-free diet. We will recommend a specific prescription or homemade diet for the food trial period. This way we know exactly what your pet is consuming. All OTC foods contain ingredients (and palatants) not listed on the label (esp. dry cat foods) or are contaminated with ingredients from the processing facility; however, scrutinizing ingredient labels is still crucial. *If the homemade diet is elected, we will provide you with a recipe. If a commercial diet is elected, we will recommend a pure prescription diet that may be tried.* **Select and use only one diet.** It is particularly important that **the trial diet for dogs not** contain: beef, dairy products, corn, rice, wheat, soybean, chicken, lamb, or eggs; while **for cats**, the trial diet should also not contain fish products. These are the most common ingredients in dog and cat foods, and are the most common food allergens. While on the food trial, your pet **may not receive anything else by mouth unless prescribed by us.** This means **NO PEOPLE FOOD** and also includes chewable vitamins, herbal, nutritional, and arthritis supplements, chewable heartworm or flea preventatives, rawhides, bones, antlers, flavored nylabones, table scraps, anything flavored, (toothpastes), anything used to camouflage medications, **anything not related to the ingredients in the diet.** *We know it may be difficult to be 100% strict during the food trial; however, bear in mind that this may be the answer to your pet's skin and/or itching problem(s). Use a chart to note ANY dietary indiscretions and the date that they occur. The length of the food trial varies; minimally, they are 8 weeks long, but it may take 12-16 weeks in an individual pet to appreciate a noticeable improvement in clinical signs. It is important not to stop the trial until you speak with the dermatologist.* Once your pet has an appreciable change in his/her clinical signs (usually a decrease of 80% or more in symptoms), he/she will be placed back on his original diet to observe for a recurrence of signs. If the signs recur within 1-30 days, then disappear again when the trial diet is reintroduced and infections are cleared, a food allergy is confirmed. You and your pet's dermatologist will decide how to proceed in order to place your pet on a diet he/she can tolerate.

If you have any questions, or your pet has any problems, please do not hesitate to call us. The diet we would like your pet to be on during this food elimination trial is:

Rayne Nutrition

Royal Canin

Hill's

Eukanuba

Do not use a raw diet if your pet (or anyone in the home) is growing or elderly or on immune suppressive drugs (i.e. steroids, Atopica, Apoquel).