

Aliso Beach Animal Clinic
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Food Allergy and Hypoallergenic Diets

1. Various foods, food preservatives, and additives, when ingested may cause itchy skin disease and/or intestinal disease in certain animals.
2. This is an acquired disease and frequently the animal may have been ingesting the allergic food for months to years before any problems arise.
3. There is currently no accurate blood or skin test to tell if your pet has a food allergy. The only method is by avoidance and challenge.
4. To determine if a pet has a food allergy he/she must be placed on a carefully selected hypoallergenic diet. Studies have shown that most cases can be diagnosed after the pet has been on the diet for 8 weeks; however, some cases may take up to 10 weeks to respond.

The “Hypoallergenic” Diet

1. The home-prepared diet is the best type of diet to use during the trial period.
2. The ingredients to use are based on what your pet has eaten in the past, and what he/she is currently eating. Thus, we will select **novel** ingredients which your pet has had no or very limited exposure to.
3. The diet consists of a protein, carbohydrate, and water. The meals can be cooked in any fashion as long as no additional ingredients such as milk, butter etc are used.

Example:

Proteins
Canned tuna fish in water
COOKED FISH
Ham
Pinto beans
Tofu
Rabbit
Turkey
Wild game (venison, ostrich etc.)

Carbohydrates
Potato
SWEET POTATOES
Canned Yams
Oats
Quinoa
Turnips
Canned Pumpkin

Buffalo
Amino Acid Tablets

The doctor will usually select your dogs diet from above.

4. The ingredients selected are mixed together in approximately a 50/50 ratio.

Feeding Guidelines:

<u>Weight of Dog</u>	<u>Amount of Food Per Day</u>
20 lbs	3-4 cup mixture
50 lbs	5-6 cup mixture
75 lbs	7-8 cup mixture

Remember these are rough guidelines. Your pet may require more or less food per day.

5. In order to increase palatability, your pet's veterinarian may approve of 1 or more of the following: Salt, Oils (safflower, olive, peanut, almond), peanut butter, molasses.
6. The diet is fed exclusively for 6-10 weeks.
7. NO other treats, snacks, or supplements are to be given during the trial. This includes rawhides, chew hooves, pig ears, bones, etc.
8. In order to give medications, you can use pieces of the hypoallergenic diet only. Do not use cheese, hot dogs, etc to disguise medication during the dietary trial. Likewise, treats must be made of the same ingredients as those in the trial. Treats should be limited to marshmallows or test foods which have been blended and dried in the oven.
9. Keep all other pets' foods, garbage, and human food away from your pet's reach during the trial. Watch closely to limit your pets access to foods when outdoors.
10. **If your pet has anything else during the trial, you may get false results and have to start over.**
11. Remember, this is not a balanced diet-it is intended for short-term use only. Your pet may lose weight on the diet. If this seems excessive, if your pet doesn't eat, or if you have any questions-please call the clinic.
12. It is advised to keep a diary of your pet's itching during the trial so that we may better monitor progress. Grade the itching on a scale of 1-10, also noting where your pet is scratching. Example:

Day 1	10/10	Feet, face belly
Day 7	7/10	Feet, face
Day 8	9/10	Feet, belly
Day 14	5/10	Feet
Day 15	5/10	Didn't want to eat
Day 16	5/10	Appetite back, licking feet only

Some pets may not like the diet. Discuss using flavor enhancers with your pet's dermatologist.

Cats

- Cats are sometimes more difficult to get to eat a home cooked diet
- Outdoor cats must be kept away from other food sources. Thus, it may be necessary to confine them indoors in order to have a successful food trial.
- We will sometimes use meat baby food (ideally without added onion powder) as the protein source.
- Cooked game such as rabbit, venison, or duck may also be used. These can be purchased at specialty meat stores (see yellow pages under Meat-Retail).
- In the event that your cat refuses to eat the home cooked diet, we may use a prescription limited to antigen diet.
- Do not allow your cat to go more than 2 days without eating.

AT THE END OF THE TRIAL-WHAT'S NEXT?

At the end of the dietary trial it is necessary to challenge your pet their original diet to see if their signs worsen. **This is how the diagnosis of food allergy is made.**

Call our clinic before beginning a re-challenge as a recheck appointment may be needed.