

ANIMAL SKIN EAR & ALLERGY CLINIC

ELIMINATION DIET TRIAL

We believe that your pet has a food allergy. Not an allergy to a particular brand of food, but to one or more of the protein sources in the food. Therefore, we want to feed a diet that eliminates all possible proteins your pet has been exposed to. We will be using a prescription diet for the next 8-12 weeks, since over-the-counter foods cannot rule in or rule out a food allergy. Additionally, blood testing for food allergy has no validity in the diagnosis. If you wish to do a home-cooked diet trial, we can advise you on appropriate novel proteins/ingredients and sources from which to procure them.

It is very important that you adhere to the following guidelines:

1) Always make the diet change from your current diet to the prescription diet **GRADUALLY**, by feeding 1/4 by volume the new diet and 3/4 by volume the old diet on Day 1, then feeding 1/2 by volume the new diet and 1/2 by volume the old diet on Day 2, then feeding 3/4 by volume the new diet and 1/4 by volume the old diet on Day 3, and finally only the new diet on Day 4. The first day of the 12 week food trial is the first day that your pet is eating the new diet exclusively.

2) Occasionally, a change in diet may cause a digestive upset - either vomiting or diarrhea. If this should occur, please call us **IMMEDIATELY** for advice! Your pet may refuse to eat the above diet. If he does not eat for 2 days, or a digestive upset occurs, please call us for instructions before giving up.

3) It is very important to emphasize that your pet ***not be allowed to put anything in his/her mouth except the prescription diet and water***. This means NO vitamins or essential fatty acid supplements, biscuits, greenies, dental treats, antlers, butcher bones, nylabones, rawhides, or ANY table food, treats or canned food. We do have prescription treats and canned food that are allowed, if you wish.

If your dog lives with a cat, he/she must not be allowed access to the cat food or to the litter box(es)! Also, he/she should not share a water bowl with any other pets in the home who are not on the prescription diet. If your pet is a cat, he/she must not be allowed to access the dog food or go outside where he/she may hunt small animals.

If your pet is on any **MEDICATION**, please give us a complete list, as all chewable medications have protein-based flavorings (pork, soy, etc) and we can advise if a tablet or liquid form is available. If your pet is on a chewable form of heartworm medicine, you must switch to a topical preventive (e.g. Advantage Multi or Revolution). If your pet is on a chewable monthly flea and tick prevention, you may switch to either a topical monthly preventive (e.g. Vectra, Advantix, etc) or Bravecto – which is a chewable preventive but lasts for 12 weeks, so given at the start (within the first 4 days) of the diet trial, it will not interfere with the diet trial and will provide protection against fleas and ticks for the duration of the diet trial.

Aside from the prescription treats and canned food we can provide, you may use rutabaga or bananas as treats and/or to give pills in. Do not use marshmallows. Rutabaga is a vegetable available at most supermarkets. Peel and boil them as you would a potato, until soft. Do not add oil or any flavorings to the water or to the rutabaga after they are cooked. You may supplement the diet with the Rayne novel protein diets we carry, provided your pet has not had those proteins

in previous diets. Once we have chosen the protein (kangaroo, alligator or rabbit), we have them available in the clinic here or you can order them from www.raynenutrition.com. Please remember that a giving chewable oral supplement, medication or preventive, or giving cheese, peanut butter, bread, etc. even though they are in small amounts is enough to cause failure of a diet trial. The size of the food item does not matter to the immune system. We understand that this diet trial may be inconvenient and expensive, so we do not want to allow you to give your pet anything that could invalidate all your hard work. Most dogs are very happy to get the prescription kibble, rutabaga and/or kangaroo canned food/treats. Don't give in to your temptations to give other treats ☺ If you are not sure if something is ok to give, call us first!

4) In order to determine if your pet has a food allergy, this diet must be **strictly** maintained for 8-12 weeks. You may not see complete relief from itching, scratching or licking, but you should see some improvement. Some dogs may take up to 10 weeks to fully respond. It is very important that you keep a DAILY ITCH calendar. Please contact us before you change your pet's diet, whether improvement is noted or not.

5) Your pet may not need to remain on this diet for the rest of his/her life. Once we have established that your pet has a food allergy, we will then outline procedures to determine which foods cause an allergic response. When we know which pure foods cause a problem and which ones don't, we will attempt to feed your dog a balanced commercial preparation that he/she will tolerate. Alternatively, if he/she does well on the diet, it may be continued indefinitely.

6) We will see your pet as needed while on the diet trial to monitor his/her progress. If he/she develops further symptoms, or has recurrent skin or ear problems during the diet trial (this can happen, especially in the beginning of the trial), we will treat these problems as they arise while continuing the diet trial.

7) This prescription diet is nutritionally complete and balanced, and we strongly recommend that your other dog(s) or cat(s) eat this diet exclusively as well for the next 12 weeks, so as to avoid possible exposure to other foods that can cause your pet's trial to fail.