

Hypoallergenic Food Trial

Animals that develop an adverse reaction to an ingredient(s) in their pet food commonly show two types of problems.

First is an allergic reaction that causes year round, non-seasonal itchy skin (with possible ear infections, inflamed paws, pimples and rashes).

The second type of reaction can cause gastrointestinal signs (i.e. vomiting, diarrhea, flatulence, and decreased appetite). This can be a minor irritation all the way to the development of inflammatory bowel disease.

Some animals will show a combination of both reactions.

These reactions occur over time and are caused by something your pet commonly eats rather than a recently introduced food. Changing to another brand of pet food seldom helps as many ingredients are common to the different pet foods.

In addition there is no correlation between the quality of the diet and an adverse reaction.

These problems commonly require a hypoallergenic diet. There are two types.

One is the hydrolyzed diet (i.e. the ingredients are altered to be below the allergic threshold). An example of this is Hill's Science Diet Z/D.

The second is a limited ingredient diet (either prescription food or homemade) which contains a protein source your dog has never eaten before and a very limited number of additional ingredients. For example, numerous pet food manufacturers offer a Duck and Potato diet that contains, other than duck and potato, a non-reactive fat source and vitamins and minerals.

Important things to remember with a food trial:

1. Wean your animal onto the new diet over 5-7 days.
2. It can take up to 12 weeks to clear all allergens present in your animal's system.
3. You must be very strict.

You cannot give them anything flavored

- a. Treats and rawhides
- b. Animal medicines

- c. Some heartworm preventative
- d. Animal toothpaste
- e. Human food

Pets with a food allergy may have an “allergic personality” and be predisposed to seasonal allergies (allergies to pollens that cause itchy skin) or a flea allergy.