

Food Allergy

A food allergy is a reaction of the body's immune system in response to particular foods or food ingredients. For unknown reasons, in a small number of dogs and cats the immune system mounts an unusually strong response to some foods.

What we see:

- Licking, chewing, at feet, legs, armpits, belly and groin
- Face rubbing
- Inflammation and redness on skin with or without bacterial infection
- Head shaking and ear infections

Most common food causing allergies:

- Beef Egg
- Chicken Wheat
- Dairy Products Corn
- Soy

The only method to identify this condition is to feed the patient a restricted diet with a protein source the pet has never eaten for at least 8 weeks to determine if there is improvement in the clinical signs. This is the approximate time it takes to alleviate the clinical signs. Changing the brand of the diet is unlikely to help. If after the 8 week trial there is no improvement, then we can switch his/her diet to a hypoallergenic prescription diet. If this specialized diet does not work either then it is most likely that there is another underlying cause of the skin problem such as airborne pollens or inhalant allergy.

Avoid:

- ALL table food
- Rawhides
- Flavored vitamin supplements or chews
- Pig ears
- Cat food

Keys to success of the Elimination Diet Trial:

- Feed the patient only the recommended diet for at least 8 weeks
- Ensure that all your family members and friends know that the pet is receiving a special diet
- If you have more pets of the same species, feed the same diet or feed separately
- Keep the patient out of the room during your meals to avoid him or her picking up dropped food
- Do not administer medications hidden in other foods other than the prescribed or recommended diet. If medicating the pet is difficult, we can explore other treatment options. Bread and peanut butter ok.
- If the pet has the habit of eating dropped food or garbage when outside, keep him/her on a leash.

Recommended Diet

Hills Science diet Z/d or d/d

Engineered to prevent recurrent episodes of allergies.

Acceptable treats:

- Green Beans (cooked in plain water, no salts, oils or spices). Frozen green beans preferred.
- Cooked/Baked potatoes, peeled and cubed. No spices or salts or oils added
- Cucumbers, broccoli, cauliflower
- Apples, carrots, bananas, pears

Supplements:

Add Salmon Oil (Fish Oil Omega 3) to the patient's meals. Studies suggest that fatty acids may alleviate itching associated with allergies.

If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Dr. S