



## Food Allergies / Adverse Food Reactions

Dogs and cats can develop intolerances or allergies to a variety of ingredients in their diets. Mostly commonly in dogs these are **beef, chicken, lamb, wheat, corn, soy, dairy and eggs**. Rarely dogs react to additives, dyes or preservatives. Cats most commonly react to **fish, beef and dairy products**.

**Signs** of food allergies or intolerances can vary but generally are associated with itching and/or ear infections. Sometimes there is also gastro-intestinal upsets including diarrhoea.

**Diagnosis** of food allergies/intolerances in animals can only be achieved through an elimination diet where the ingredients of the previous diet are completely excluded for a period of 6-8 weeks. If there is an uncomplicated food allergy then the symptoms should significantly improve in this time.

At the end of the 6-8 weeks we will recommend to return to all of the original diet and this is known as "**the rechallenge**". Most dogs with food allergies will show a return of the symptoms within **1-3 days** of eating the original diet but some may take **up to 7 days**. If there is a reaction to the original diet return immediately to the elimination diet and then contact us.

If your pet has a positive reaction to the rechallenge it is consistent with a diagnosis of food allergy and we will then proceed with a **sequential ingredient challenge** to identify which ingredient/s your pet reacts against and which they can tolerate.

Some dogs have a combination of food and environmental allergies and in these cases we often see a partial improvement while eating the elimination diet and a partial relapse of signs when challenged. Keeping notes or a diary can assist with these cases.

### What to feed?

There is no such thing as a "good food" or "bad food" (except chocolate and onions). We can choose **home prepared** diets which are theoretically more ideal but are more time consuming to prepare and not nutritionally balanced (unless we add supplements).

Alternatively we can choose a **prescription hydrolysate diet** which is a commercial diet specifically formulated for investigating and managing food allergies and are only available from vets. They are **Royal Canin Hypoallergenic** or **Hills Z/D Ultra**. These diets are more convenient and nutritionally balanced but often not as cost effective.

The principle with home prepared elimination diets is that we choose a novel protein and carbohydrate. This is something your pet has not been exposed to previously and therefore cannot be allergic to. Some examples of these are below:

**Protein/Meats** Kangaroo, buffalo, donkey, horse, goat, rabbit (meat availability varies)

**Carbohydrates** Pumpkin, sweet potato

**Other vegetables** can also be fed like peas, carrots, celery and cabbage but NOT corn, rice, pasta or white potato. Chick peas, barley and lentils can also be fed.

**Treats** are important but we need to remember that they contain some of the possible ingredients your pet is allergic to so it is important **NOT** to feed your pet's usual treats during the elimination diet. We advise substituting with fresh **bones** (the same as the NEW meat source) or some **fruit** such as apple, pear or melon. **Specific treats** may also be available such as "sweet potato" chews but we advise not selected any "smoked" treats.

Please also be aware that some medications are flavoured (such antibiotics, arthritis tablets, heartworm and flea control) and these should be discussed with the dermatologist as to whether a substitute can be used for the duration of the trial.

#### **Approximate volume of food – total daily amount which may be divided**

This varies with each individual dog and should be used as a guide only

<b>Weight</b>	<b>Protein</b>	<b>Carbohydrate</b>	<b>Total</b>
5kg	130g	270g	400g
10kg	200g	400g	600g
15kg	260g	540g	800g
20kg	400g	800g	1.2kg
30kg	520g	1.1kg	1.6kg
50kg	830g	1.6kg	2.5kg

Recommended pet meat suppliers:

**Pets Meats Suppliers**      **414 Oxford Street, Mt Hawthorn**      **9444 1220**

**South Street Pet Supplies**      **372 South Street, O'Connor**      **9337 8599**