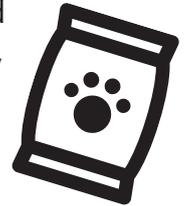


FOOD ALLERGIES AND YOUR PET (What pet owners should know about food reactions!)

WHAT IS A FOOD ALLERGY? Food allergies occur when your pet's immune system mistakes a food protein as an invader and initiates an immune response. This immune response can cause itching, infections, vomiting or diarrhea.



Food allergies should be diagnosed by your veterinarian to distinguish them from common causes of similar symptoms.

DIAGNOSING FOOD ALLERGIES: THE DIETARY ELIMINATION TRIAL

The best way to diagnose food allergies is through a **dietary elimination trial**, since blood and skin tests for food allergens are generally unreliable. To begin this process, your veterinarian will ask for your pet's diet history and perform a physical exam and diagnostics to rule out other symptom causes.

WHAT MAY MAKE YOUR VET SUSPICIOUS OF A FOOD ALLERGY?

Seasonality: A year-round itch, often with little variation from season to season.

Pattern of Itchiness: The most common areas for food allergies include ears, feet, groin, armpits or skin around the eyes and muzzle.

Breed of Pet: Certain breeds, such as Labrador Retrievers, West Highland Terriers and Cocker Spaniels, are predisposed to food allergies.

Age: Food allergies typically begin when pets are less than 1 year of age, but can manifest later in life depending on dietary history.

WHAT DOES A DIETARY ELIMINATION TRIAL INVOLVE?

Novel or hydrolyzed protein and carbohydrate sources limit the source and amount of potential allergens in a diet.

Eating the recommended diet exclusively for 6-8 weeks will show the full benefits of the diet, even though some positive benefits are typically seen in the first month.

Prescription diets are used because over-the-counter diets, even those with similar ingredient lists, can be cross-contaminated during manufacturing.

Feeding approved treats limits the source and amount of potential allergens.

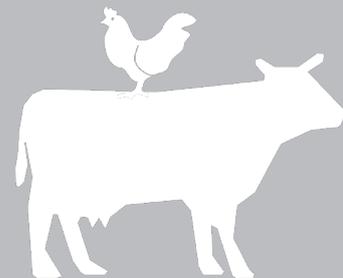


WHAT IF MY PET'S SYMPTOMS IMPROVE?

Your veterinarian may recommend challenging your pet's symptoms with individual ingredients to identify the source of the symptom. Your pet's symptoms may be greatly reduced if food allergens are strictly avoided.

WHAT IF MY PET'S SYMPTOMS DO NOT IMPROVE?

Your veterinarian may recommend another diet elimination trial with different ingredients or further investigation and treatment for common allergens.



COMMON FOOD ALLERGIES

Most pets are allergic to animal proteins:

Dogs:

Beef Eggs
Chicken Dairy

Cats:

Beef Eggs Fish
Chicken Dairy

Uncommon/Rare Allergies:

Grains
Gluten (Only documented in Irish setters and border terriers. Never in cats).

FOOD ALLERGY MIMICRY

Food allergies are not as common as you may think. Food allergy is only about 10 percent as common as atopic dermatitis (eczema) in dogs and cats.

PARASITES, VIRUSES AND BACTERIA

While food allergies are one possible cause for itchiness, ear infections or diarrhea, there are many more likely causes that are not related to food. Other causes of gastrointestinal issues include parasites, viruses, bacterial infections, pancreatitis and pets eating something they shouldn't.



DIET IMBALANCE

When pets have symptoms only on certain diets, it could be because of an ingredient intolerance instead of an allergy. For example, the food may have too much fat, the wrong fiber content or have other properties that don't agree with your pet, but aren't associated with an allergy.



ENVIRONMENT

The most common cause of itchiness in pets are fleas, allergies to flea saliva and environmental allergies such as dust mites, pollen and grasses. Flea and environmental allergies are much more common in pets than food allergies even though they have very similar symptoms.



MYTH vs. FACT

	Myth	Fact
Diets advertised as "hypoallergenic" will not cause allergies.	✓	
Pets can be allergic to any protein ingredient found in pet food.		✓
Over the counter diets are appropriate for diet elimination trials.	✓	
Continually rotating diet ingredients will prevent or manage food allergies.	✓	
Continually rotating diet ingredients limits diet choices to diagnose food allergies since every ingredient your pet has eaten before is no longer viable in a dietary elimination trial.		✓