

Food Allergies

Allergic cat



In cats, food allergy usually produces scabs and other signs of itching around the face or neck.

A food allergy is a reaction to food that involves the body's immune system. It is usually always a protein particle in the food that is responsible for reactions. Your dog may itch, lick, and chew paws, flank, groin, neck, and ears. The itching can be during all seasons. A small percentage of food allergy dogs may only have chronic otitis. The dog may also have some gastrointestinal signs such as chronic vomiting, diarrhea, belching, and frequent bowel movements. Food allergy dogs often have both varying degrees of skin signs and gastrointestinal problems that persist.

Many people erroneously assume itching due to food allergy requires a recent diet change of some sort. In fact, the opposite is true. ***Food allergy requires time to develop; most animals have been eating the offending food for years with no trouble.***

Allergic dog



The classical canine food allergy lesion distribution includes signs of facial itching, foot or limb chewing, belly itching, and recurrent ear infections.

There are other sources of allergies, so check with your veterinarian before pursuing food allergy diagnosis and treatment on your own.

How to Perform a Food Trial

The Basic Principle To determine whether or not a food allergy or intolerance is causing the skin problem, a hypoallergenic diet is fed for a set period of time. If the pet recovers, the original diet is fed for up to two weeks to see if itching resumes. If we see recovery with the test diet and itch with the original diet, then food allergy is diagnosed and the pet is returned to either the test diet or another appropriate commercial food indefinitely.

What Is a Good Hypoallergenic Diet? The traditional method is the use of a novel protein and carbohydrate source; that is, something the pet has never eaten before. In the past, lamb has been the protein source of choice as American pet food companies had traditionally failed to produce lamb-based pet foods. Unfortunately, recent production of lamb and rice-based foods has removed lamb from the acceptable hypoallergenic diet list.

Fortunately, many pet food companies have discerned the need for diets using unusual protein and carbohydrate sources with a minimum of additives. Foods can be obtained based on venison and potato, fish and potato, egg and rice, duck and pea, and even kangaroo.

It is important that during the diet trial no unnecessary medications be given. No edible chew toys (such as rawhides or bones) should be given. Treats must be based on the same food sources as the test diet. (Beware of rice cakes, though, as wheat is commonly used as a filler.)



Above are some of the common hypoallergenic canine diets that we use.

Below is a feline hypoallergenic diet that we frequently use.



The Hydrolyzed Protein Method More recently a new approach has been introduced using therapeutic diets made from hydrolyzed proteins. This means that a conventional protein source is used but the protein is broken down into molecules too small to excite the immune system. Below are the hydrolyzed diets that we carry.



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