

International Center for Veterinary Services □□□□□□□□□□

ICVS Dermatology Service

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FOOD ALLERGY-- Diet Trial

Instructions

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We are concerned that your pet's skin condition may be related to an ingredient (or ingredients) in your pet's diet. Animals can become very sensitive to certain ingredients in their diets (frequently beef products, dairy products, grains, and/or preservatives). These ingredients are common to most pet foods, so changing brands or flavors doesn't usually help. Many new pet foods are released each year promising that they contain "novel proteins" or are "hypoallergenic." Unfortunately, these diets are not completely reliable for diagnosing a food allergy. Also, there are no reliable blood tests available to diagnose a food allergy.

Food allergies can begin at any time in an animal's life, and so far research has been unable to determine what causes or triggers these allergies. Fortunately, animals with food allergies can be greatly helped by being placed on diet specifically designed to address their individual sensitivities.

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Like humans, pets can also develop allergies to things that are inhaled and/or contacted (pollens, dusts, molds, etc.), making it virtually impossible to distinguish between food allergy and other allergies during your initial consultation. We normally recommend ruling out the possibility of food allergies first, which entails feeding the special diet described below. In order to diagnose and treat environmental allergies, further testing is necessary. These additional tests may be scheduled if there is no response to this dietary trial.

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INSTRUCTIONS

1. Prepare a diet of _____ The ratio of _____ to _____ should be approximately _____.
2. The food items should be baked or boiled. **DO NOT** add seasonings, gravies, sauces, etc.
3. **DO NOT** add salt, butter, or margarine.
4. To start, feed as much (cup for cup) as you have been feeding previously. Some pets on the special diets will still be hungry, so you may increase the amount if necessary.
5. Provide plenty of fresh water. The water should be boiled and cooled tap or bottled water only.

6. Make sure that your pet receives absolutely nothing else to eat. **DO NOT** give treats, snacks, table scraps, substances in gelatin capsules, etc. Raw hide and all other food based toys must be withheld.

7. Ensure that your pet does not “forage” for food (including leaves, grasses, etc.) outside. **Do not** leave your pet unattended outside, and leash walk your pet at all times.

8. If you have other pets, you may need to change their feeding habits for a few weeks to ensure that your allergic pet does not receive additional food.

9. Continue this dietary trial for a full **8 to 12 weeks**.

10. It is a good idea to introduce this new diet gradually. On the first day, mix (on a volume basis) one-fourth of the new diet with three-fourths of the regular diet. On day two, mix the diets half and half. On day three, use three-fourths the new diet, and one-fourth the old diet. On day 4, begin feeding 100% new diet for **8 to 12 weeks**.

11. If your pet is receiving a chewable heartworm preventive or any other type of medication or supplement, please inform us.

12. At the end of the **8 to 12 week** trial, please contact ICVS at 8456-1939/40 to give a progress report. Keep a calendar log of your pet’s overall itch level. If there has been improvement, then further recommendations will be made at that time. If there has not been any improvement, then please inform ICVS and we will help you and your pet with next phase of diagnosis and treatment.

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Tel: (8610) 8456-1939/1940; Email: reception@ICVSASIA.com ; www.ICVSASIA.com

2014-1-22