

# RECOMMENDED PROTOCOL FOR RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL ELIMINATION DIET TRIAL



## TAKE A COMPLETE NUTRITIONAL APPROACH TO ALLERGIC DERMATITIS

Veterinary dermatologists agree that a Gold Standard diagnosis includes an elimination diet trial<sup>1,2,4,5,6</sup> followed by a dietary challenge.

Is the underlying cause **Adverse Food Reaction (AFR)** or environmental **Atopic Dermatitis (AD)**?

- No real efficacy with quick-fix solutions – allergy testing<sup>1</sup>, anti-pruritic drug<sup>2</sup> and intra-dermal test (IDT)<sup>2</sup> have no real efficacy as a cat and dog diagnostic tool<sup>1,2</sup>
- When diagnosing the underlying cause of Allergic Dermatitis, only a thorough, long-term work-up<sup>3</sup> is efficient

## HOW TO RUN A SUCCESSFUL ELIMINATION DIET TRIAL

Obtain a complete dietary history. Ask the owner about all the pet foods, human foods, treats, snacks, flavoured medications and supplements the pet has eaten in the past.

Agree owner's long-term commitment<sup>1</sup> to the 6 to 8 week elimination diet trial.<sup>1,4,5,6</sup>

- Advise owner to discontinue: shop-bought treats and snacks, chews, leftovers from the table (even vegetables that may have been in contact with meat), dental products and toothpaste, flavoured medications and nutritional supplements (including vitamins, nutraceuticals, flavoured probiotics) for the duration of the elimination diet trial
  - Be aware that certain prescription medications (for heartworm and fleas, NSAIDs, antibiotics and all capsules) may also contain meat protein
  - For treats, advise owner to keep some ANALLERGENIC kibbles in a clean, sealed container or feed fruits and vegetables (such as apples or carrots, but NOT grapes or raisins)
  - Any permitted unflavoured medicines can be hidden in pieces of banana
  - Some dermatologists allow the use of low dose anti-pruritic medication to minimize flares during the trial
  - Allow a 5 to 7 day transition period from current diet to new diet
- Remind owner to save a portion of the current diet for later dietary challenge
  - Continue feeding the elimination diet for 6 to 8 weeks and check with the owner regarding reduction in pruritus, skin signs and/or gastrointestinal signs within 1 month
  - To confirm food allergy as the diagnosis, challenge the pet with the original diet
  - Advise owner to start adding back in a small portion (e.g. 10–20%) of the original food to the elimination diet daily until clinical signs recur
  - This usually occurs within 1 to 4 days, but in rare cases may take up to 2 weeks, especially in cats
  - As soon as clinical signs recur, stop the original diet and continue feeding ONLY the elimination diet ; the pet should again improve within 1 to 4 weeks

SELECT THE DIET TO BE FED EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE ELIMINATION DIET TRIAL:



**FOR BOTH CATS AND DOGS, THE RECOMMENDED DIET IS ANALLERGENIC**

Other options include:

- **HYPOALLERGENIC** • **SELECTED PROTEIN**
- **Home-Cooked Diet** including one novel protein and one novel carbohydrate to be defined from dietary history.



## LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT FOLLOWING THE ELIMINATION DIET TRIAL

After a diagnosis of AFR is confirmed, it is recommended to switch to a partially hydrolysed protein-based diet, such as **HYPOALLERGENIC**.

If the owner is reluctant to change, the initial elimination diet may be continued as the maintenance diet, such as **ANALLERGENIC**.

- Alternatively, other products formulated for management of AFR may be considered
- If a Home-Cooked Diet is used for maintenance, the recipe must be formulated by a veterinary nutritionist to ensure it is complete and balanced
- Regular follow-ups with the owner are recommended to verify adherence to the recipe, as low compliance will result in unbalanced nutrition<sup>7,8</sup>
- It is also important to manage owner's expectation regarding cost, given home prepared diet may be more expensive than a veterinary therapeutic diet<sup>9</sup>



## NEXT STEPS IF ELIMINATION DIET TRIAL IS INCONCLUSIVE

If no improvement is seen after 8 to 12 weeks on the elimination trial diet, consider the following options and solutions:

PROTOCOL-RELATED		
<b>OPTION</b> – is the owner not compliant with diet. Possibly mixing foods, feeding snacks, treats, flavoured medications?	<b>OPTION</b> – is the pet obtaining other foods (getting into other pets' food, roaming outside, family members or neighbours feeding)?	<b>OPTION</b> – are the food bowl, kitchen and/or preparation area cross-contaminated with other foods?
<b>SOLUTION</b> – reinforce instructions to feed the elimination diet exclusively	<b>SOLUTION</b> – reinforce with owners the importance of keeping pet under control at all times; recommend attaching a bell to cat's collar to decrease chance of catching prey; ensure pets keep away from any other pet food bowls	<b>SOLUTION</b> – reinforce with owners the need to wash hands and dishes before preparing and serving diet each time, and keep product sealed in original packaging
DIET-RELATED		DISEASE-RELATED
<b>OPTION</b> – if a selected protein-based diet was used, has the selected protein been fed to the pet in past (not novel) or did the selected diet actually contain proteins in addition to labelled ingredients (more common with over-the-counter diets)?		<b>OPTION</b> – is the pet not suffering from AFR or could the animal suffer from a mixed pathology including AFR?
<b>SOLUTION</b> – consider switching to an extensively hydrolysed protein-based or Home-Cooked Diet if AFR is still strongly suspected		<b>SOLUTION</b> – consider undiagnosed flea allergy dermatitis; atopic dermatitis; bacterial or yeast infection; ectoparasites; and other differential diagnoses for clinical signs

Check with local regulatory before use

### References

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