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FOOD ALLERGY TRIALS

Highlights :

- 1) It makes no difference if your dog has eaten the same food for the last 10 years. That does **NOT** stop them from developing food allergies.
- 2) It tends to be the animal protein source that causes the allergy. Less commonly the carbohydrate sources can be the problem. Rarely do fats or oils (animal or soybean) cause an issue.
- 3) Most common food allergic problems are : **beef, wheat, corn, dairy** (milk, cheese, ice cream), **egg, soy, and chicken**. ***Beef, wheat and corn are the most common issues by far.*** (These are not 'bad' ingredients, they are only 'bad' if the individual animal in question is allergic to them).



If there has been a history of multiple diets in the past, then you should strive to avoid any animal protein source that they have already been exposed to. Aim to choose a new single protein source, and a single new carbohydrate source they have not been exposed to before.

Bear in mind that lamb is no longer considered as novel or hypoallergenic as it used to be because it has been a common addition to so many dog's diets these days. ***Also realize that some dogs that have an issue with beef will, over time, cross react to lamb and venison as well (possibly a red meat issue overall).***

Protein sources currently considered reasonably hypoallergenic: ostrich, goat, rabbit, venison, buffalo, kangaroo, and to a lesser extent fish and duck. Carbohydrate sources considered very hypoallergenic : potato, sweet potato, cassava, millet, peas, beans.

Not all “sensitive skin” diets are acceptable for a trial rule out diet as many actually contain corn and/or wheat. Many sensitive skin diets simply have more added omega 3’s but are NOT restrictive with their protein and grain contents, which is what we are looking for in a food trial diet choice.

Principles of the Food Trial

- 1) NOTHING in the dog’s mouth except the chosen food and water for 3 months. NO treats and NO table scraps. This includes chew toys (rawhide = beef), pig ears, dental treats, and flavored plastic chews. **Even small amounts can ruin the effort entirely.**
- 2) There is NO earthly way that you can divine what is and is not a problem for the pet without a food trial unless you can read a crystal ball (and if you can then I need to hire you so we can both get rich).
- 3) Recall it takes a month or more to work the exposed antigens out of the pet’s system.
- 4) Avoid ALL else for 3 months. THEN, if you have a good result and the pet has improved, you can begin to feed back single ingredients for 5 days at a time and see if any itching and irritation develops. This will allow you to know exactly what ingredients to avoid which may allow you to have a wider range of commercial foods to choose from.
- 5) If there has been a definite positive response to the food trial, then from this point onward, any new food or treat that you wish to try to transition to after the trial should be added one at a time so you can tell what exactly causes a problem, if any arise within a week of a new food addition. If there is no problem with the addition or change after 5 days then all is well. If signs of allergy return within 5 days of a new diet addition then compare the main ingredient listings to see what is likely to be the cause of the problem. Or call the office and we will help.

Legitimate Treats :

- 1) Almond Butter or Cashew butter can be used (No peanut butter or cheese especially if they have ever had that previously)
- 2) Pieces of the actual protein in the chosen diet. Jerkies are acceptable. Or cut up canned chunks and freeze, bake, or microwave it.
- 3) Venison jerky, or rabbit jerky
- 4) Deer antlers or elk antlers for chew toys
- 5) Pieces of the actual carbohydrate source in the chosen diet – potato, sweet potato, rice cakes.
- 6) **Apples** (dried chips), **bananas** (dried chips), melons, broccoli, **baby carrots**, green beans.

- 7) **Effective trick** : Use the kibble from the chosen trial food as a treat. Most dogs are easily fooled, especially if you put the kibble into a separate container from the dog food, and place it wherever it is that you usually store the treats. If it comes from the 'treat spot' and a 'treat container' then most of the time they are perfectly happy to have a bite of their kibble for a treat.

Some Acceptable food trial diets to consider :

Feline :

Prescription Diets : (from veterinary hospital)

Royal Canin Hypoallergenic Selected Protein Diets

PD (Potato/Duck)

PR (Potato/Rabbit)

PV (Potato/Venison)

Hill's Science Diet Prescription

d/d Duck, canned formula only

d/d Venison, canned formula only

Pet Store Brands : (Petsmart, Petco, etc)

Natural Balance

Green Pea & Duck, dry and canned (Petco, Petsmart)

Green Pea & Salmon, dry and canned

Canine :

Prescription Diets : (from veterinary hospital)

Royal Canin Hypoallergenic Selected Protein Diets

PV (Potato/Venison), PR (Potato/Rabbit), PW (Potato/Whitefish)

Royal Canin Hypoallergenic Selected Protein Moderate Calorie

PW (Potato/Whitefish)

Pet Store Brands : (Petsmart and Petco)

Natural Balance

Sweet potato & Venison

Sweet potato & Fish

Sweet potato & Bison

These are our food trial diet suggestions which have been checked to be sure they do NOT include any of the SIX common problem ingredients. **There is a difference between diets that may be acceptable to eat AFTER a trial and diets that are acceptable to use during a trial.** The trial diets must be as free of contaminants as possible, and a great many routine diets which

claim to be free of this and that are produced on machine lines where there is no sterile wash between batches of entirely different food.

Small amounts such as that contamination between batches may not be a problem for even most food allergic dogs, but it can ruin a trial for some of the more severely allergic animals. So the short story is, **do NOT scrimp on the trial diet or substitute blindly with a food that has not been shown to be free of cross contamination in the manufacturing process.**

-Dr. Jacky May