

Clinical Signs

Signs of food allergies may not be what you think. Although chronic diarrhea can be caused by food intolerance, food allergies are usually thought to be a skin disease. Signs may include:

Frequent scratching

Scratching when touched

Recurring or chronic ear infections

Recurring or chronic skin infections

These signs usually occur *year round*

Pets with food allergies may also have seasonal or environmental allergies

Signs may be made worse by a concurrent skin infection by a yeast or bacteria



Stolley Park Veterinary Hospital

3020 W Stolley Park Road

Grand Island, NE 68801

(308) 384-6272



Food Allergies



www.stolleyparkvet.com



©2012SPVH

Allergic skin disease caused by the protein or carbohydrate in your pet's diet



Diet Trial

A true diet trial is strictly feeding your pet only a veterinary approved hypoallergenic diet and ***nothing else***. This is done for at least 90 days, and ideally during the winter season when other allergies would be less likely to interfere.

During these 90 days, **NO OTHER FOOD OR TREATS** can be given. There are hypoallergenic treats available. If a response is seen, then at the 90-day recheck, reintroduction of other foods will be discussed. However, if successful, your pet will always be on a special diet with limited access to other foods.

Diagnosis

The best way to diagnose a food allergy is to introduce a hypoallergenic food and feed only that food for 90 days. This is called a “Diet Trial”. Failure of a diet trial may be due to:

- Unknown access to another food. The usual culprits are another pet’s food or “table” food, especially if there are children in the house
- A concurrent seasonal or environmental allergy
- The wrong type of hypoallergenic food for your pet.

Treatment

If the diet trial is successful, then the treatment of choice is to continue feeding the hypoallergenic diet and treats, and avoid any foods that may cause your pet to itch.

Medications:

If a skin infection is also present, medication may be necessary. The type of medication to use may depend on the type and severity of infection.

- Antibiotics/Antifungals
- Medicated Shampoos
- Steroids
- Topical wipes
- Ear medication

One important thing to remember is to set expectations from the beginning. A hypoallergenic trial is not a cure, especially if other allergies are present. The key is to expect that even a successful hypoallergenic food doesn’t prevent the occasional flare-up, and to have a plan in place when they do occur.

Rechecks are recommended at days 30 and 90 of a Diet Trial to assess the response of the skin infection to medication and the response of the immune system to the food. Also, we need to make sure your pet likes the diet!