

DIETARY ELIMINATION TRIAL INSTRUCTIONS

A dietary elimination trial has been recommended for your pet. Please read the below directions on how to conduct a dietary elimination trial on your pet.

What is an adverse food reaction?

An **adverse food reaction** is an inappropriate response by the body to a particular food item. This can be a food allergy or a food intolerance. Food ingredients that trigger an adverse food reaction are very small! Most commonly, dietary protein is the source of the allergy. However, carbohydrates, fats, flavorings, vitamin and mineral supplements, or products from food processing can have proteins that can trigger a reaction.

What does an adverse food reaction look like?

Adverse food reactions are caused by the body's immune system. The body's response to a food reaction often manifests as symptoms related to the skin or gastrointestinal tract. Skin-related symptoms include itchiness (scratching, chewing, or licking), redness of the skin and ears, and chronic ear infections. Gastrointestinal symptoms include vomiting, diarrhea, and an uncomfortable abdomen (bloating or gas). Signs of adverse reactions can also appear on bloodwork such as protein losing enteropathies, where protein is lost in the gastrointestinal tract. The symptoms of a food reaction can range from mild to very severe.

What is a dietary elimination trial?

A dietary elimination trial ("diet trial" for short) is a diagnostic tool used to determine if an animal has an adverse food reaction. A specific diet is **strictly** fed for a **minimum of 8-12 weeks (up to 6 months)** and the patient's symptoms are monitored over that time. If the symptoms resolve, then a food allergy is strongly suspected. If there is no change in symptoms, a food allergy cannot be ruled out, but it is less likely. Recommended diets for a diet trial include prescription hydrolyzed or novel ingredient diets or a novel, limited ingredient home-cooked recipe.

What is a hydrolyzed diet?

A **hydrolyzed diet** is a **prescription** diet specifically made for patients with food sensitivities. The protein component of the diet has been broken down (hydrolyzed) into small pieces in hopes that the body cannot recognize it as a trigger for an allergic reaction. These diets are typically soy based because most animals have not been exposed to soy protein. Some diets are based on a hydrolyzed chicken protein. You will notice these diets also have a limited number of ingredients to minimize the chances of an adverse food reaction. These diets are made in special factories to prevent trace allergens from entering the diet.

What is a limited ingredient/novel ingredient diet?

A **prescription limited ingredient diet** contains only a few ingredients – often a single protein and carbohydrate source. The diets can be used in an elimination trial if the animal has never been exposed to the ingredients in the diet. These diets are made so that they contain no trace allergens. A limited and novel ingredient home-cooked recipe can also be used for a diet trial as formulated by a qualified veterinary nutritionist.

Can I /should I use an over-the-counter diet?

Diets for a diet trial can only be purchased with a prescription. It is generally **NOT recommended** to use an over-the-counter diet for an elimination trial. The simple reason is that we cannot guarantee that over-the-counter diets have not been contaminated on the production line. Veterinary prescription diet companies have very strict protocols to prevent cross-contamination of hydrolyzed and limited ingredient prescription diets.

What CAN I feed my pet during a diet trial?

The simple answer is – **only the prescribed diet**. It is recommended that only the prescription diet is fed for the entirety of the trial. It is recommended to stick to one form of the diet – canned or kibble – because differences in production can create allergens that may trigger a reaction.

How do you obtain the prescription diet?

These prescription diet can be purchased from your primary veterinarian's clinic.

What CAN'T I feed my pet during a diet trial?

You should not feed ANY non-prescribed food items or items that have flavored coatings during the feeding trial.

The following food items should NOT be fed during a diet trial:

- Other cat/dog foods besides the prescribed diet
- Commercial treats (biscuits, chews, cookies etc.), *including* those advertised for food allergies
- Table scraps (meat, vegetables, fruits, broth, canned meat juices, drippings, cooking oils, etc.)
- Pill pockets or anything used to help administer pills
- Toothpaste or dental chews
- Nylabone®s or similar coated toys
- Rawhides, bully sticks, bones, pig ears, antlers
- Flavored medications (such as chewable antibiotics, chewable anti-inflammatory medications, etc.). If these must be given during the diet trial, please keep in mind these may confound the results.
- Supplements such as fish oils and probiotics are also discouraged.

What can I do to help my pet's dental health?

During a diet trial, dental chews or toothpaste (even if unflavored) are not recommended as it can confound the diet trial results. If your pet is confirmed to have food hypersensitivities, then your pet still may not be able to consume dental chews, water additives, or toothpaste after the diet trial is completed. So, you may be wondering what you can do to help your pet's dental health.

Veterinary dental specialists recommend daily brushing of your dog's teeth as the gold standard to prevent plaque and calculus and slow the progression of periodontal disease. You can brush your pet's teeth daily without the use of toothpaste. Veterinary dental specialists also recommend annual dental procedures under anesthesia as an important part of your pet's oral health care program. For more information, please see the American Veterinary Dental College webpage: <https://afd.avdc.org/pet-periodontal-disease/>

Are there any tips or tricks for a diet trial?

- Unfortunately, **tough love goes a long way**. It may be difficult to resist feeding your loved one treats and table scraps but it is necessary for a proper feeding trial. Remember, if anything other than the prescribed diet is given to your pet then it makes understanding the results of the diet trial very challenging.
- Keep other pets' food and human food out of reach. Feed all pets separately. Consider a microchip feeder for all pets. Try to keep separate water dishes if possible. Wash all food/water bowls separately from any other pet bowls or human dishes/bowls/utensils.
- Let all family members and visitors know that your pet cannot receive any treats aside from their prescribed diet. Watch children and toddlers for dropped food.
- **Need treats or rewards?** Use the prescribed diet in unique ways. For example, hiding it in interactive toys or soaking the kibble in water, hiding it in a Kong type toy, freezing it in a toy and letting them lick it out. If you seem excited about the "treat" your pet often will not realize that they are eating their regular food.
- Make sure you order new food long before you run out – just in case you can't find the prescribed diet quickly. Please plan accordingly.
- **BE PATIENT**. Occasionally a pet's symptoms begin to resolve within two weeks, but many take closer to 8-12 weeks for improvement. Improvement is typically slower in patients with skin allergies.

What do you do at the end of the diet trial?

- After 8-12 weeks, your pet should be seen by the primary veterinarian managing their disease for evaluation. Depending on your pet's disease, certain tests can be run to indicate how well your pet responded to the diet trial.
- If your pet is on a steroid or certain medication to manage their disease, your primary veterinarian may want to wean them off the medication first before you stop the diet trial.

- After the examination and any diagnostic results return, your veterinarian can tell you if the diet trial is complete, if your pet requires more time on the diet, or if you need to contact the nutrition service for further recommendations.

Will your pet be on this diet forever?

Sometimes if a pet is doing well on a hydrolyzed or novel protein diet, we will keep them on the diet long term. **All of these diets are formulated for long-term feeding.** But if you would like to change the diet or add in treats and snacks, you can do so after the diet trial is completed and do things one at a time. We do NOT recommend over-the-counter foods or treats for pets with adverse food reactions due to the high likelihood of undeclared allergens that can vary per batch in over-the-counter products.

Often food reactions occur within 1-2 days of introducing the new food item. However, studies show that signs can be delayed up to TWO WEEKS! If your pet does not have any symptoms on the new food item then you can continue to give it. If they have any adverse reactions, do not continue to use that food item.

If you would like to **change your pet's diet**, this can be done by taste-testing the new diet first and watching for an adverse reaction for the next two weeks.

- If no reaction occurs, you can transition your pet onto the new diet over 7-10 days. Please keep in mind there are calorie differences between foods, so please make sure to match the calories to their old food and monitor their weight closely on the new diet.

If you would like to **add in treats or snacks**, you can add them in *one at a time* and spaced *two weeks apart*.

- We recommend on focusing on whole food items like fruits or vegetables. There are prescription hydrolyzed treats by Royal Canin and Hill's that can be used as well.

Prescription Diet Options for CANINE Dietary Elimination Trials

The following diets are available for a dietary elimination trial for **DOGS**. However, ***not every diet may work for your pet*** so it is important to discuss which ones are recommended with the prescribing veterinarian.

Brand	Variety	Form
Royal Canin®	Anallergenic	Kibble
Royal Canin®	HP (Hydrolyzed Protein) – Regular, Small Dog, Moderate Calorie	Kibble
Royal Canin®	HP (Hydrolyzed Protein)	Canned
Royal Canin®	Selected Protein Adult PD (duck)	Kibble
Royal Canin®	Selected Protein Adult PD (duck)	Canned
Royal Canin®	Selected Protein Adult RC (Fish)	Kibble
Royal Canin®	Vegetarian	Kibble
Purina®	HA Hydrolyzed Vegetarian	Kibble
Purina®	HA Hydrolyzed Chicken Flavor	Kibble
Purina®	HA Hydrolyzed Chicken Flavor	Canned
Purina®	HA Hydrolyzed Salmon Flavor	Kibble
Purina®	EL Elemental*Not in stock yet*	Kibble
Hill's®	d/d potato & duck	Kibble
Hill's®	d/d potato & duck	Canned
Hill's®	d/d potato & venison	Kibble
Hill's®	d/d potato & salmon	Kibble
Hill's®	d/d potato & salmon	Canned
Hill's®	z/d	Kibble
Hill's®	z/d small bites	Kibble
Hill's®	z/d	Canned
Rayne Clinical Nutrition®	Crocodilia- MAINT	Kibble
Rayne Clinical Nutrition®	Crocodilia- MAINT with quinoa	Kibble
Rayne Clinical Nutrition®	Crocodilia- MAINT	Canned
Rayne Clinical Nutrition®	Kangaroo – MAINT	Canned
Rayne Clinical Nutrition®	Low-Fat Kangaroo-MAINT	Stew
Rayne Clinical Nutrition®	Low-Fat Kangaroo-MAINT	Canned
Rayne Clinical Nutrition®	Low-Fat Kangaroo-MAINT	Kibble
Rayne Clinical Nutrition®	Low-Fat Kangaroo-MAINT with Quinoa	Kibble
Rayne Clinical Nutrition®	Plant-Based with Quinoa	Kibble
Rayne Clinical Nutrition®	Rabbit-MAINT	Stew
Rayne Clinical Nutrition®	Rabbit-MAINT	Kibble
Rayne Clinical Nutrition®	Rabbit-MAINT with Chickpea	Kibble
Rayne Clinical Nutrition®	Rabbit-MAINT with Quinoa	Kibble
Blue Buffalo®	NP Novel Protein Alligator	Kibble
Blue Buffalo®	NP Novel Protein Alligator	Canned
Blue Buffalo®	HF Hydrolyzed	Kibble
Blue Buffalo®	HF Hydrolyzed	Canned

Prescription Diet Options for FELINE Dietary Elimination Trials

The following diets are available for a dietary elimination trial for **CATS**. However, **not every diet may work for your pet** so it is important to discuss which ones are recommended with the prescribing veterinarian.

Brand	Variety	Form
Royal Canin®	Anallergenic	Kibble
Royal Canin®	HP (Hydrolyzed Protein)	Kibble
Royal Canin®	Selected Protein Adult PD (duck)	Kibble
Royal Canin®	Selected Protein Adult PD (duck)	5.9 oz Can
Purina®	HA Hydrolyzed	Kibble
Hill's®	d/d Duck & Green Pea	Kibble
Hill's®	d/d Venison & Green Pea	Kibble
Hill's®	d/d Duck	5.5 oz Can
Hill's®	z/d	Kibble
Hill's®	z/d	5.5 oz can
Blue Buffalo®	HF Hydrolyzed for Food Intolerance	Kibble
Blue Buffalo®	HF Hydrolyzed for Food Intolerance	5.5 oz can
Blue Buffalo®	NP Novel Protein	Kibble
Blue Buffalo®	NP novel Protein	5.5 oz can
Rayne Clinical Nutrition™	Kangaroo-Main Feline	13 oz can
Rayne Clinical Nutrition™	Rabbit-Main Feline	Kibble
Rayne Clinical Nutrition™	Rabbit-Main Feline	13 oz can