



## **Food Trials**

We have advised your dog undergoes a food trial as we are suspicious that it may have a food allergy or intolerance which is causing its clinical signs.

The only way to find out if your pet is allergic or intolerant to its food is to perform a food trial.

There are blood tests available but these only give us an indication of which foods are best avoided by your dog, and do not tell us which foods your pet is allergic or intolerant too.

To put your dog on a food trial we need to find a food that contains a 'novel' protein and 'novel' carbohydrate source (ones that your dog has never eaten before), for a minimum of 6 -8 weeks, although in some dogs we need to extend the food trial to 12 weeks. We will help you choose a suitable food, often these are commercially made dog foods, although sometimes we may advise you consider home cooking food for your pet.

During the food trial your dog can ONLY eat the food that contains this novel protein and novel carbohydrate source, and drink water. Your dog can NOT have any human food, any treats (unless they contain the novel protein and/or protein source and nothing else), or any toys which have flavours impregnated into them (such as nylabones/kongs). An allergic dog can react to a very small amount of the food they are allergic too – typically something the size of a crisp, so it is important that you, your family, and your friends are very strict with your dog during this food trial period. It is also extremely important that your dog does not pick up food whilst out on walks etc.

We do understand how hard these food trials are to undertake, (we have had to food trial our own pets), but they really are worthwhile. They do help us identify if your pet has a food allergy/intolerance and the hard work of the trial is well worth it if your pets clinical symptoms are reduced or disappear.

It may be necessary, if your pet does not respond to the first food trial, to conduct a second one with a different novel protein and novel carbohydrate source, we will be able to advise you further if this is necessary.

Please remember that you are not alone whilst performing these food trials, we are more than happy to offer support and advice during this time period, as we are for all aspects of your dog's care. Please feel free to call us on 01942 677979 or to make an appointment to discuss things if you need to.