

Feeding for Success

TIPS FOR AN EFFECTIVE FOOD ELIMINATION TRIAL

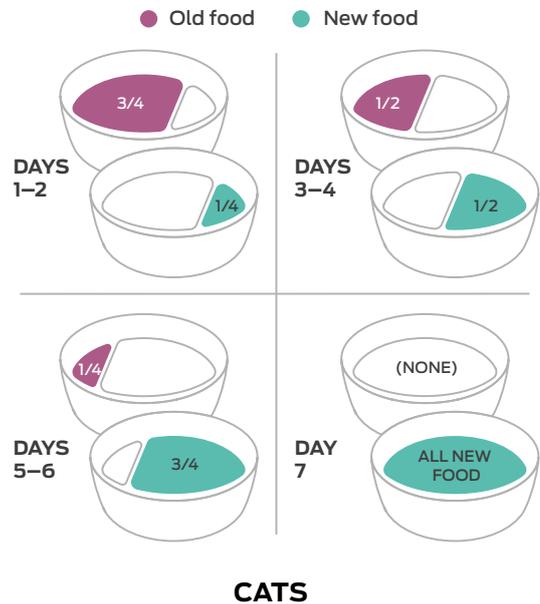
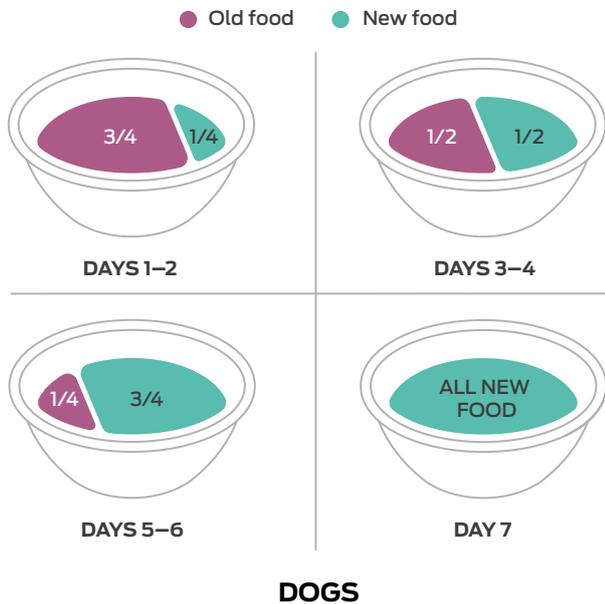
A food elimination trial, also known as an elimination diet trial, has been recommended for your pet to help diagnose the potential cause of your pet’s dermatologic or gastrointestinal signs. A food elimination trial is a diagnostic test, similar to a blood test or an x-ray, and involves feeding one of the following recommended diets exclusively or only with the recommended treats for the next _____ to _____ weeks:

Recommended Options for Food, Treats, and Medication Administration		
Brand Name and Formula	Amount Per Meal	Frequency

Food trial guidelines and tips

As with any diagnostic test, a food elimination trial needs to be performed correctly for the results to be worthwhile. Therefore, it is very important to strictly adhere to the following guidelines:

- **Switch your pet to the recommended food.** Either changing to the new diet right away or doing a gradual transition may be recommended. If a gradual transition is recommended, introduce the new diet over 7 days. See the transition schedules for dogs and cats.



Food trial guidelines and tips

- **During the elimination diet trial, it is essential that you feed the recommended foods exclusively** and give only fresh water to drink. No other foods or treats can be used unless specifically directed. If treats are needed for rewards or training, it is ideal to use the diet or treats recommended by your veterinarian. Let family members, friends, and neighbors know your pet is eating a special diet so they do not inadvertently give food or treats that interfere with the food trial. Feeding other foods can interfere with interpretation of the results of the food elimination trial.
- **Control access to other foods**, especially if other pets or young children live in the home. Eating another pet's food, feces, or table scraps will disrupt the food elimination trial.
 - Other pets of the same species can be fed the same diet or fed separately in a different room.
 - Pets of a different species should be fed in a separate room.
 - If your pet tends to eat food dropped by children during meals, consider keeping your pet in a different room during mealtimes. Do not allow your pet to lick plates after meals.
 - Immediately pick up and securely dispose of stools. If your dog tends to eat other animals' stools while outdoors, keep your dog on a short leash during walks, hikes, and runs. You may also need to keep cat litter boxes out of your dog's reach.
- **Account for medications and supplements**, whether they are flavored or unflavored. This includes flavored medications, such as monthly heartworm, intestinal parasite, flea, and tick chews or tablets; flavored or chewable antibiotics; toothpaste; and any supplements (e.g., vitamin, skin and coat, or joint health).
 - It is very important to continue medications, like flea and heartworm prevention. Some flavored medications are available as unflavored tablets or capsules, or in alternative forms such as topically applied treatments or injectable medications. Ask us about the best option for your pet.
 - Unflavored tablets should not be hidden in hot dogs, cheese, bread, or any other food other than the recommended diet unless directed otherwise by your veterinarian.
- **Plan food purchases in advance** of running out, if possible. Initially, you want to have enough food for a minimum of _____ weeks. The key is to avoid switching foods during the elimination diet trial, which can interfere with the results.
- **Store the recommended diet in its original packaging**, even if you store the bag of food in another storage container. Thoroughly wash all food storage containers and serving dishes to minimize risk of cross contamination. Make sure the food is sealed and stored in a cool, dry location to avoid food spoilage or contamination.
- **Keep cats indoors** (ideally) to prevent hunting and addition of "extra" proteins to the diet.
- **Use a journal to track your pet's clinical signs**, such as scratching, biting, licking, skin sores or trauma, soft stools, diarrhea, changes in appetite, or vomiting. The diary will also be helpful if your pet should inadvertently get food, treats, or flavored medication. Noting this information will help us evaluate the effectiveness of the food elimination trial.
- **Please contact us and ask for instructions** if your pet:
 - Vomits or has diarrhea.
 - Refuses to eat the new food.
 - Does not have a bowel movement for more than 3 days.
 - Appears to lose or gain weight.

Improvement in your pet's signs may be slow, taking _____ to _____ weeks, especially if your pet has concurrent health concerns. Also, be aware that a complete food elimination trial can take _____ to _____ weeks.

A food elimination trial can be challenging but is important in determining if your pet's clinical signs are the result of a food sensitivity. Please call us if you encounter issues or have questions.