

Common Mistakes Made During a Diet Trial for Dogs and Cats

- **Giving treats** – to continue to give treats have a container with a small amount of the approved food in it for those moments when you want to give a reward.
- **Flavoured medication** – avoid tablets and other medications which contain a protein based covering or flavouring to aid palatability.
- **Other potential sources of allergen** – list, with the help of your vet, everything else your dog or cat normally consumes. For example; supplements, dental or rawhide chews, pigs' ears, bones or anything used to coat the inside of chew toys.
- **Accidentally contaminating the diet** – take great care to wash bowls, serving scoops and your hands before preparing food to avoid stray proteins being passed on. It is also worth changing to a ceramic or glass bowl if the clinical signs are predominantly around the muzzle and face in the (albeit unlikely) chance of a contact reaction with the bowl.
- **Children dropping food** – remove your pet from the dining area at meal times and make sure any spills are cleared up straight away.
- **Cats going to other houses and being fed by neighbours** – make neighbours aware of your cat's diet will help. Investing in a bright coloured 'do not feed me' safety collar and tag can also assist.
- **Someone else looking after the animal** – make sure that kennels, dog walkers, pet sitters, friends and relatives who visit, all understand what food is to be fed to your pet will ensure the diet is strictly kept to. The more people involved the greater the chance of a lapse.
- **Stealing food from work tops, bins or raiding feed stores** – keeping all kitchen and dining areas clean, general waste bins inaccessible and all cupboards and feed bins secure will help avoid mishaps.
- **Eating something out on a walk / while out of house** – keeping your dog on a lead whilst walking will help prevent this. Putting a bell on your cat (if appropriate and safe to do so) will make hunting more difficult. In addition keeping cats inside at natural hunting times (dawn and dusk) may decrease hunting activity.
- **Having more than one animal in house** – separating pets at meal times and cleaning out bowls afterwards will stop animals eating food intended for other pets.
- **'Non believers' in the house sneaking a snack** – it is really important that everyone involved is on board. Sit down and explain the 'rules' and why the diet trial matters (the impact the condition is having on your pet) to all family members and friends who live at home, visit the house or have contact with your pet.
- **Stopping too soon** – some animals can take eight weeks or longer to show a positive response to a diet trial, so it is important to persevere right through to the agreed end date.