

Canine Food Sensitivity and Intolerance Testing through Salivary Diagnostics

Summary: Salivary diagnostics can be a more accurate means of testing canine food intolerance than serum-based testing and elimination trials. This also offers pet owners an opportunity to develop a diet that caters specifically to an animal's nutritional needs.

Body: Recent studies have proven salivary diagnostics to be a highly accurate form of canine food intolerance testing. By measuring food-associated IgA or IgM antibodies in saliva, food sensitivity can be more precisely determined even while in latent or pre-clinical form.

Food sensitivity and intolerance is a distinctly different condition from true food allergy, which is rare. Food sensitivity or intolerance is both a digestive and an immune system issue, with symptoms such as vomiting and diarrhea; gas, and skin problems such as itching. Meanwhile, food allergies are the body's immediate response to specific ingredients.

Food sensitivity is traditionally determined through serum-based testing, which entails measuring offending IgG or IgE antibodies in serum. This, however, does not prove to be as accurate as saliva-based testing, as it displays a lower level of specificity for each patient, yielding false positives and negatives in a number of cases.

Another means of identifying food sensitivity is with elimination trials. An animal's intolerance of a specific food or compound is verified based on whether a food-related symptom abates following the systematic and progressive removal of one ingredient over the course of six to eight weeks.

In contrast to the two abovementioned methods, using saliva for canine food intolerance testing is more effective at detecting the condition even prior to the emergence of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) or related skin symptoms like itching. Moreover, food-associated IgA or IgM antibodies more often appear in saliva than in serum. And by focusing on identifying the types of food that need to be avoided rather than those with a lower probability of being reactive, salivary testing can prove to be a more accurate tool for finding the types of food that correctly meet an animal's nutritional needs.

Testing with the use of saliva involves identifying food reactant antibodies in both healthy dogs and those known to have or suspected of having food sensitivities. Typically, this can test for primary food antigens such as gluten in wheat, and soy, corn, eggs, milk and beef. Other meats, grains and fruits can also be tested. The process is quite simple and involves following instructions for collecting the saliva sample and sending the sample to the laboratory for examination.

Once the offending ingredient(s) has been identified, the next step is to improve the diet by substituting alternatives to ensure that the animal's daily nutritional requirements are met. Reading labels on commercial dog food prior to purchase or even carefully

creating a homemade diet can successfully alleviate the symptoms associated with food intolerance and enhance animal health.

Resource Box:

Hemopet sets the standard in [canine food intolerance testing](http://www.hemopet.org/services.html) using salivary diagnostics. Its patented Nutriscan™ technology is one of the most advanced of its industry on the market and offers a higher level of accuracy than traditional assays for detecting [canine food intolerance](http://www.hemopet.org). Visit Hemopet.org or contact 714-891-2022 for more information.