



# Sudbury Regional Cat Hospital

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## Feline Allergies

Many cats can be burdened by food and/or environmental allergies just like us. Unfortunately it can be a frustrating, tiresome road to figure out exactly what your cat may be reacting to.

The most common symptoms that can arise include but are not limited to: vomiting, frequent hairballs, chronic diarrhea/soft stool, itching/scratching, over-grooming/hair loss, chronic ear/skin infections, chin acne, anal gland infections, asthma and more.

### Food Allergies

Food allergies are most commonly linked to a reaction to a protein source and/or a grain in their food. The more common cat food allergens include – fish, beef, corn, wheat, and soy. However your cat can be allergic to almost anything and may not always correlate with the common culprits.

Your veterinarian can provide an allergy formula cat food that is grain free with a novel protein source. There are also brands that can be found in pet stores. The difference between the two is that veterinary formulas ensure there is no cross contamination during processing.

Therefore if a pet store brand is not working, you may want to give one from your veterinarian a try.

A food trial should take place for at least 6-8 weeks before deciding if the food is benefiting. However for gastrointestinal symptoms you can see relief in as little as 3-5 days; while skin related issues can take up to 4-6 weeks.

The new food should be fed exclusively, providing no other treats or table food, etc.

### Environmental Allergies

When symptoms are linked to environmental allergens it can be even harder to pinpoint the cause. An environmental allergy blood panel can be performed to rule out common vegetation, pollen or mites that may be to blame. If the panel comes back negative, the task is to look closely at things in your home environment.



If willing, a referral to a veterinary allergy specialist out of town is available where skin prick testing can be performed. This is a more accurate way of testing.

Common household items that can be potential allergens include: scented candles, Scentsy/essential oil diffusers, Febreze, harsh detergents/cleaning products (Mr. Clean, Pine

Sol, Tide, etc), cigarette smoke, perfumes, etc.

Even items that are tailor made for cats should not be overlooked. Your cat could potentially react to a bed made out of wool, or a cat tree made out of a particular material. Keep a close eye on what they come in contact with and exclude what you may suspect as the issue.

Some cats could have a combination of both food and environmental allergies. In this case, sometimes lowering the allergen load from one or the other may still bring symptoms down. Therefore if your cat appears to have an environmental allergen a switch to an allergy friendly food is still advisable.

Pet store brands: Natures Variety/Instinct (rabbit), GO! Sensitivity and Shine(duck), Natural Balance Limited Ingredient (duck or venison), Performatrin Ultra Grain Free Limited Ingredient Diet (Duck)

Veterinary brands: Hill's D/D (duck or venison), or Z/D (hydrolyzed chicken), Royal Canin Hypoallergenic (duck) or Hypoallergenic Hydrolyzed Protein (hydrolyzed soy), Rayne Rabbit or Kangaroo

Novel protein sources include – duck, venison, rabbit and kangaroo