

## The therapeutic consult process: what to expect

Thank you for your interest in a therapeutic nutrition consult for your pet. We realise that our consultation process can be a little different to what some owners may expect, so we have created this handout to make sure everything is clear.

*Unlike many veterinary specialists, we do all our consultancy remotely (no face-to-face or phone appointments) – this allows us to provide our services to clients all over the world.*

### **How do I book a therapeutic consult for my pet?**

For pets with medical needs, we do require a referral from your pet's local veterinarian. What this means is that your vet needs to complete our online "Vet Request Form", via our website. There is also a form for you to complete, on diet history and ingredient preferences, also available via our website.

We have two separate forms, so your pet's veterinarian can provide us with important medical information, and you can provide us with all the details about feeding practices, food preferences etc – often this is information that your veterinarian would be unable to provide.

Once we receive both online forms, we will go ahead and book in the consult. At that point, we will let your veterinarian know the cost of the consult and the turnaround time. *It is important to be aware that all initial communication is via your pet's veterinarian – once you have completed the diet history form, please get in touch with your veterinarian if you have any questions, concerns or requests.*

*We do not routinely email owners to discuss the information provided in the Diet History Form, or ask further questions, unless information is missing or unclear – it is therefore very important that you use the Diet History Form to tell us everything you think is important or relevant to the formulation of the recipes.*

Once complete, the report and personalised recipes will be emailed to your referring veterinarian, who is then able to have a look and ask any questions. Your veterinarian will then pass the report/ recipes on to you, during a face-to-face consult, or by email.

*Again, just to be clear, the therapeutic consult does not involve making a face-to-face appointment for the pet or talking on the phone with the owner. Your veterinarian will provide us with detailed medical records, and lab results, such that we are able to formulate personalised therapeutic recipes for your pet's medical needs, without any need to see your pet in person.*

## **What will be provided?**

The therapeutic consult includes a detailed report outlining the nutritional goals of the recipes. This is where we explain what the features of the diet are (for example, low protein, high fat etc.) and why those features are appropriate for your pet. Also included is a list of treat options and a shopping list with links for the required supplements and ingredients.

Two different, personalised recipes are included – we try to incorporate ingredients your pet enjoys in the recipes, as much as possible. Detailed preparation instructions for the recipes are provided. Finally, there is a separate “Frequently Asked Questions” document that includes more information on common questions and problems – what to do if your pet won't eat the diet, how to transition to the new diet, how to include different supplements, and so forth.

## **What happens after the report and recipes are received?**

Once you have received a copy of the report and recipes from your veterinarian, you can begin transitioning to the new diet, as per the provided instructions. *If you have any questions about the recipes, you can contact your veterinarian, or you are welcome to email us directly.* We do understand that if owners have questions of a practical nature (for example, whether brown rice could be substituted for white rice) then it may be quicker and easier for everyone (especially your local veterinarian) for any questions to be sent directly to us.

It is important to be aware that the consultation includes 3 hours of follow-up email support; this is generally sufficient to answer one or two lots of emailed questions and/or provide initial help, as needed. If one or more recipe/s are unpalatable to your pet, we will provide one lot of amended recipes. Further amendments, ongoing email support or new recipes all incur an additional cost.

## **Why can't I request a therapeutic consult without my vet being involved? This process seems a bit complicated!**

We do understand that the referral process can be a bit confusing, however there are some good reasons why we do things like this. *The most important thing to understand is*

*that the therapeutic service is provided to veterinarians only, not owners.* This is why your veterinarian must request the consultation, and why the completed report is provided to your veterinarian. We also routinely invoice the referring veterinarian's practice, and not the owner directly.

We provide the therapeutic service to veterinarians only, because it is remote service, and legally and ethically, veterinarians should not provide any form of medical treatment or therapy (therapeutic consults are considered a form of disease treatment) without seeing the pet face-to-face and also meeting the owner.

*We hope that helps to answer some common questions about therapeutic consults and the referral process. If you do have any further questions or concerns, please do ask your veterinarian and they will bring these concerns to our attention.*