

## The Fresh Food Tolerance Diagnostic Tool

- **Phase 1: Define a Singular Research Protocol**
  - **Problem Entity:** Digestive upset following the introduction of fresh foods.
  - **Problem Statement:** The hamster is experiencing soft stools, mild lethargy, or gastrointestinal distress after consuming fresh vegetables or fruits.
  - **Primary Objective:** To isolate the specific fresh food item, or the exact portion size, that is triggering the digestive intolerance.
- **Phase 2: Isolate & Control All Variables**
  - **Independent Variables (The Suspects):**
    - *Variable A: The Specific Food Item.* (Mechanism: Certain vegetables like iceberg lettuce have high water content that easily causes diarrhea, while cruciferous veggies like broccoli can cause gas.)
    - *Variable B: Portion Size.* (Mechanism: A hamster's gut flora needs time to adapt; a 1-teaspoon serving might cause illness, while a 1/4-teaspoon serving of the exact same food might be perfectly digested.)
  - **Confounding Variables (The Controls):** The base dry diet (seed mix and lab blocks) must remain exactly the same. No cage cleanings during the test period (to prevent stress-induced loose stools). Water must be fresh daily.
- **Phase 3: Mandate a Quantitative Data Log**
  - **Data Table Required Columns:** \* Date
    - Control Check (Base Diet Unchanged? Y/N)
    - Fresh Food Introduced (e.g., Cucumber, Kale)
    - Portion Size (Measured in fractions of a teaspoon)
    - **Outcome: Stool Quality Score (1-5 Scale)**  
*Scale Key: 1 = Liquid/Diarrhea (Seek Vet immediately); 2 = Very soft/smudgy; 3 = Soft but holds shape; 4 = Normal, slightly moist; 5 = Perfect, firm, dry pellet.*
- **Phase 4: Guide a Quantitative Analysis**
  - **Segmentation:** Instruct the user to separate their log into "Optimal Digestion Days" (Score 4-5) and "Poor Digestion Days" (Score 2-3).
  - **Calculation:** Have the user look at the "Poor Digestion Days" and identify the common denominator: was it always a specific vegetable type, or did scores drop only when the portion size exceeded 1/2 teaspoon?
  - **Insight Statement:** "The data strongly suggests the primary driver of the digestive upset is \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g., 'cucumber' or 'portions larger than 1/4 tsp')."
- **Phase 5: Conclude with a Testable Hypothesis (A/B Test)**
  - **Hypothesis Formulation:** "My hypothesis is that by eliminating [Problem Food/Large Portion] and introducing only 1/4 teaspoon of a low-water vegetable (like zucchini) every other day, I can maintain a consistent Stool Quality Score of 5."