SUSPECTED FOOD ALLERGY IN DOGS

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SUSPECTED FOOD ALLERGY
(CUTANEOUS ADVERSE REACTION TO FOOD)

Is the patient pruritic?

NO

Recurrent skin or ear infections?

NO

DIAGNOSIS
Not allergic

DIFFERENTIAL
Sarcoptic mange

TREATMENT
- Selamectin (FDA approved)
- Moxidectin, imidacloprid (FDA approved)
- Lime sulfur dip (FDA approved)
- Isoxazolines (extra-label)

DIFFERENTIAL
Flea allergy dermatitis
- Lesion distribution caudodorsal

TREATMENT
- Topical parasite preventive
- Antipruritic treatment
- Treat secondary pyoderma

DIFFERENTIAL
Atopic dermatitis
- Seasonal pruritus or nonseasonal pruritus with seasonal flare

DIAGNOSIS
Diagnosis of exclusion

DIFFERENTIAL
Food allergy
- Nonseasonal pruritus
- Recurrent secondary skin infections (eg, otitis externa/pyoderma)

TREATMENT
- Treat and resolve secondary infection

YES

GI signs?
- Regurgitation/vomiting/nausea
- Diarrhea
- ≥3 bowel movements per day

NO

DIFFERENTIAL
Flea allergy dermatitis
- Lesion distribution caudodorsal

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TREATMENT
- Treat and resolve secondary infection
INVESTIGATION
Choose which elimination diet trial (e.g., hydrolyzed, novel protein, home-cooked) will be given. 
- Diet should be readily available and easy to obtain (to minimize trial interruptions)
- Diet should be palatable
- Diagnosis can be made with any of these diet types, providing all potential variables (e.g., no flavored medications, prevent ingestion of other animals’ feces) are addressed
- Subsequent diet trial with a different type of diet may be needed if the first trial fails but food allergy remains a top differential diagnosis
- Diet should also be based on life stage (e.g., growth formula for young dogs)

TREATMENT
Topical heartworm/intestinal helminth/flea/tick preventive

Pruritus/clinical signs improved ≥50% after 4 weeks?

NO
Continue diet trial
Follow up after 4 weeks
Pruritus/clinical signs improved ≥50%?

NO
Continue diet trial
YES
Diet challenge with prior diet
Patient pruritic?

NO
YES

DIAGNOSIS
Cutaneous adverse food reaction
- Consider which individual ingredient to challenge

DIAGNOSIS
After 12 weeks, not food allergy/cutaneous adverse food reaction
OR
Diet trial is not valid
- Identify reason for lack of improvement