**DIAGNOSIS OF PRURITUS**

**Information for this section was sources from Textbook of Veterinary Internal Medicine: Diseases of the dog and cat, 5th ed. , by Stephen J. Ettinger. Vol 1. Chapter 9: pgs 32-33**

Many of the lesions look the same. YOU MUST garner a good history from the client.

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| Signalment | Information |
| Age | Critical information for prioritizing differential diagnoses. Scabies and demodicosis are noted primarily in younger animals.  Atopic dermatitis, food allergy and pyoderma occur more commonly in older animals. |
| Breed | Some are breed-specific. Golden retrievers, Dalmations and many small terrier breeds are at increased risk for development of atopic dermatitis. |
| Sex | Not common in pruritic skin diseases.  May be noted with Sertoli cell tumors, male feminizing syndromes and canine female hyperestrogenism. |

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| General Findings | Information |
| Diet | Food allergy or intolerance in both dogs and cats. It normally coexists with other allergic skin diseases such as atopic dermatitis and flea allergy dermatitis.  Lipid-deficient diets may exacerbate canine seborrhoea. |
| Environment and Exposure | Seen in animals permitted to roam free such as feline scabies and flea allergy dermatitis.  Grooming establishments, kennels and veterinary practices offer additional opportunities for contagion. |
| Other Household pets | Dogs and cats share cat flea as a common ectoparasite however you will sooner see a dog presenting with flea allergy dermatitis. |
| Human Contacts | Pruritic popular rash in an owner with a pruritic pet may suggest zoonotic infestation with canine or feline scabies mites. |

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| Specific History | Information |
| Site, Onset and Progression | Knowledge of the initial sites is useful if the disease has spread before veterinary care could be administered.  Canine scabies starts at the margin of the ear pinnae before generalising.  Rapid-onset of pruritus should indicate an ectoparasite or drug induced disease.  Insidious onset is more suggestive of slowly progressive, chronic skin diseases such as atopic dermatitis, food allergy, pyoderma and seborrhoea. |
| Intensity | You will rarely see an animal exhibit pruritus in the examination room.  The notable exceptions are canine and feline scabies, canine flea allergy dermatitis and feline food allergy.  Frequency and intensity can be ascertained by asking the owner how frequently the animal licks and scratches when left to his/her own devices. |
| Predictability | Atopic dermatitis and flea allergy dermatitis are seasonal diseases in many parts of the world. |
| Response to Previous Therapy | Response or lack of response to previous medications, particularly corticosteroids and antibiotics, may offer additional clues.  Prior diminished pruritus in response to antibiotics in dogs often is overlooked and indicates the likelihood of pyoderma. |

