





Aggressive Flea control

Flea allergy dermatitis is the most common cause of feline dermatitis. Since fleas may not be apparent, aggressive flea control on all contact pets to eliminate the flea population is the primary of confirming this diagnosis.

Young to Middle age cat

Old cat with sudden onset of dermatitis

Lime Sulfur Dip Trial

Ectoparasites such as Demodex gatoi, Cheyletiella, and otodectes can cause dermatitis and be difficult to find on skin scrapes. Weekly dips with lime sulfur for 4-6 weeks should resolve any infections. Treatment with avermectins will kill otodectes and Cheyletiella but are ineffective for D. gatoi.

Food Trial

Food allergy is one of the more common causes of feline dermatitis. Feeding a novel protein source in an extreme limited ingredient diet for 10-12 weeks will confirm or eliminate this differential.

Allergy Testing

Environmental allergies including insect hypersensitivity can occur in cats but are less common than flea and food allergies. Allergy testing cats is difficult due to the lack of specific serum testing and the poor reactivity of skin tests.

Biopsy, Consider medical workup and abdominal ultrasound.

Paraneoplastic dermatitis caused by hepatic and pancreatic adenocarcinoma or cutaneous lymphoma can mimic allergies but occurs in old cats that usually present with weight loss and other evidence of metabolic disease.

Biopsy

This will identify the etiology or at least be able to suggest a infection (folliculitis or diffuse pyogranulomatous dermatitis), hypersensitivity reaction (eosinophils and mast cells), autoimmune skin disease (interface dermatitis), neoplasia, or psychogenic (complete absence of inflammation).