

So here's the frustrating thing about skin cases.

All my refractory / resistant skin cases eventually go through some sort of 'empirical' treatment and diagnostic process.

And figuring out skin problems has been mysterious sometimes and sometimes, people are frustrated by how long it takes to hit the Golden Note on the case.

So, here are some cases and their outcomes. This is to illustrate how screwed up some skin cases are.

Case 1: Dog, itchy, chronic ear infections, sores on the body, foot licking. We did skin scrapes and fungal cultures, and we gave oral antibiotics for the skin infections and tried to manage the skin itching situation with anti-inflammatories and anti-histamines. We managed prevailing skin health conditions with soothing, emollient shampoos and some disinfectant foot treatments and wipes.

Nothing was really making any difference, then the dog was switched to a diet based on Millet and Duck and was cured.

Case 2: Dog, itchy, chronic ear ... and some disinfectant foot treatments and wipes...Same as Case 1.

We could make some progress but the dog was never "right" but when we started adding *raw Honey* to the diet and the dog's ears cleared up and all it had was some mild itchiness which responded to antihistamines.

Case 3: Dog, itchy, chronic ear ... and some disinfectant foot treatments and wipes...Same as Case 1.

The dog responded just about every time we intervened with antibiotics and the like, and we realized the dog was PERFECT *only* when it was getting JUST antibiotics and spent the next 11 years with ZERO itching, nor skin lesions, with no medicines of any kind for skin conditions, but ate ten million Cephalexin capsules over its lifetime.

Case 4: Dog, itchy, chronic ear ... and some disinfectant foot treatments and wipes...Same as Case 1.

Medications worked most of the time but was constantly relapsing, then we treated with antibiotics for 6 preposterous weeks and THAT long terms course of antibiotics finally fixed the skin, indelibly.

Case 5: Dog, itchy, chronic ear ... and some disinfectant foot treatments and wipes...Same as Case 1.

Nothing was really making any difference, in desperation we put the dog on Ivermectin and the case grew its hair back and cleared up. It never had mange but the treatment for mange exerted complete control.

Case 6: Dog, itchy, chronic ear ... and some disinfectant foot treatments and wipes...Same as Case 1.

Nothing was really making any difference, so I took a wild, desperate guess and put the dog on Diflucan (antifungal) despite the fact that it had no lesions consistent with ringworm, and it was "cured" and grew it's hair back and was free of skin disease for years.

Case 7: Dog, itchy, chronic ear ... and some disinfectant foot treatments and wipes...Same as Case 1.

We didn't like steroid side effects like constant drinking and peeing plus weight gain, and We gave a Cytopoint injection and absolutely NOTHING happened and they owner had spent a bundle on it, and the shot might as well have been tap water.

Case 8: Dog, itchy, chronic ear ... and some disinfectant foot treatments and wipes...Same as Case 1.

We didn't like steroid side effects like constant drinking and peeing plus weight gain, and we gave a Cytopoint injection and the dog was 'cured' for weeks and has been getting Cytopoint monthly ever since.

Case 9: Dog, itchy, chronic ear ... and some disinfectant foot treatments and wipes...Same as Case 1.

Medications worked most of the time but was constantly relapsing, finally, after a couple YEARS of skin scrapes to "confirm" that "beyond a shadow of a doubt that it's not mange, running scrapes for free I was so sure that mange wasn't involved, and YEARS into the case we found mange that had sprung up from all the cortisone use and fixing that, fixed the case. So when, along in there, did we fix the skin only to have a different problem sneak in?

Case 10: Dog, itchy, chronic ear ... and some disinfectant foot treatments and wipes...Same as Case 1.

Medications worked most of the time but was constantly relapsing. After almost a year of management in a very old dog, the dermatologist was suspicious that the dog might have "Cushing's Disease" as a possible disorder the dog had, based on clinical signs and sent him back to me for diagnosis. I ran the obligatory tests and in fact the dog DID have Cushing's. Fixing the Cushing's also fixed the skin. A Cushing's work up is about a thousand dollars the first month, diagnostically and may or may not even impact the skin. In this dog's case, it WAS the whole case.

Case 11: Dog, itchy, chronic ear ... and some disinfectant foot treatments and wipes...Same as Case 1.

Nothing was really making any difference, and honestly, the dog was better off dead than struggling with its skin all wrecked and bald. So we took our chances with this dog, (and four others which were similarly miserable and nonresponsive) to put them on Apoquel, known to cause cancer in some dogs. Within a few months we buried Bella with Lymphoma. The other four dogs remain well-managed with Apoquel and we have our fingers crossed.

So here's the takeaway from all the above.

How long will it take to just randomly guess that the solution is one of the above unexplainable cases?

Randomly figuring out that YOUR dog does better on something as weird as millet? That just raw honey will make a substantial difference? That we should just randomly put the dog on Ivermectin or Diflucan or Lifetime Antibiotics, or just throw caution to the wind and use Apoquel, or that a hundred dollars' worth of Cytopoint will (or will not) be a total waste of money?