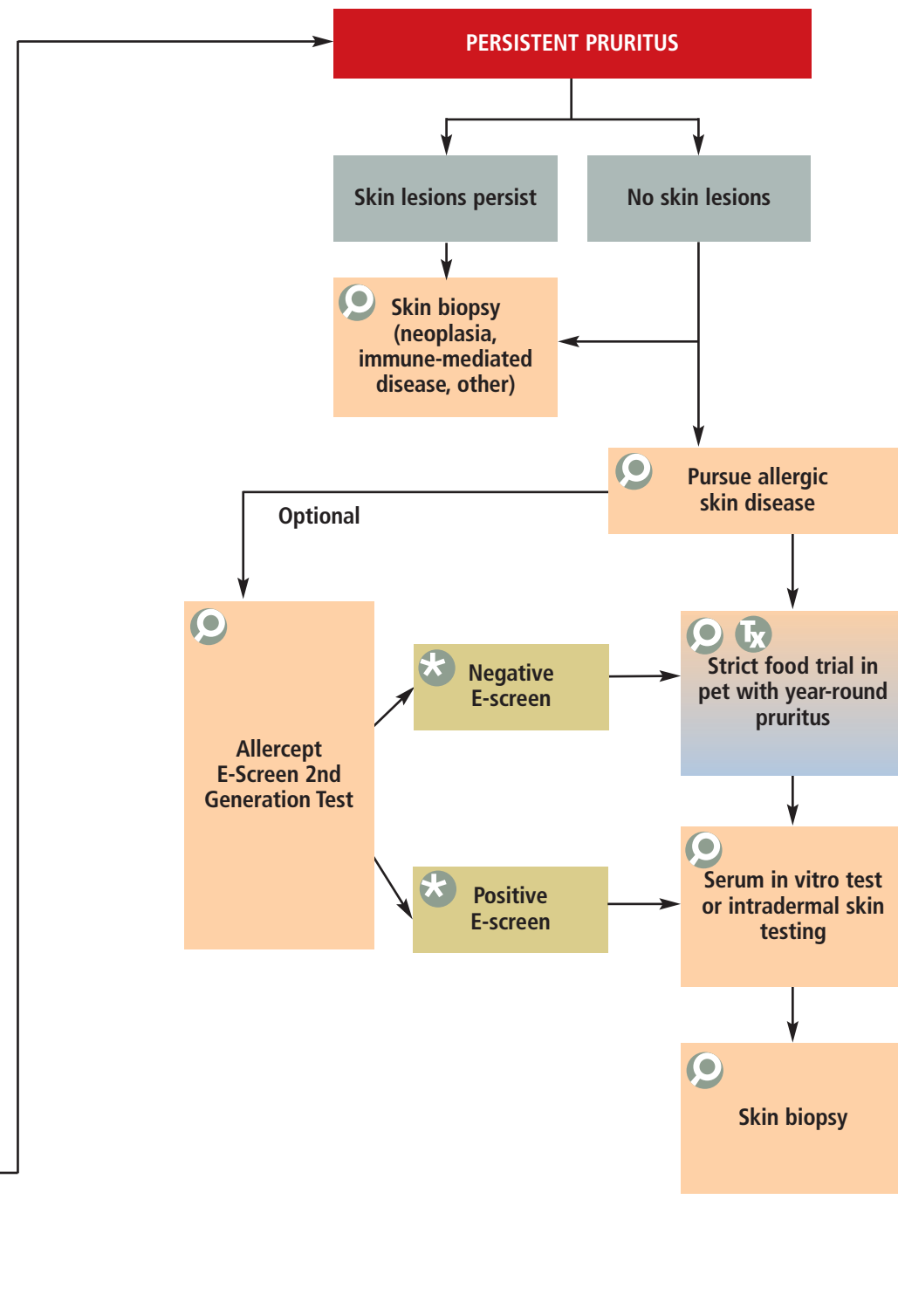
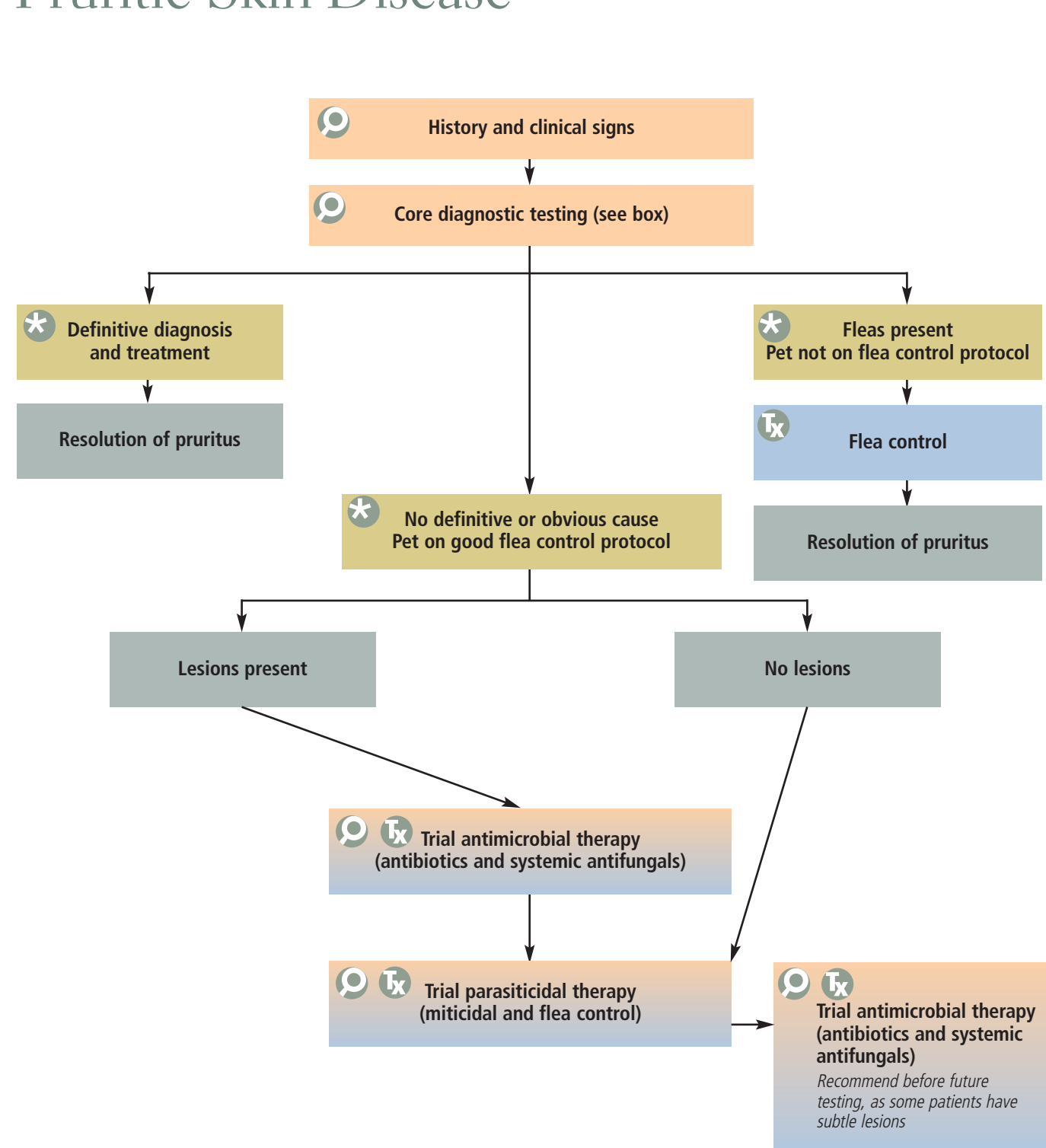


# diagnostic tree

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## Pruritic Skin Disease



PMN = polymorphonuclear cell

### CORE DIAGNOSTIC TESTS

**Skin scraping:** Negative deep skin scrapings rule out canine *Demodex* mites; may find *Cheyletiella* species; negative scrapings do not rule out canine scabies or feline demodicosis.

**Flea combing:** Aids in finding fleas, ticks, lice; helps find *Cheyletiella* mites

**Tape preparations:** May find *Cheyletiella* mites, fleas, lice

**Ear swabs:** Aid in finding *Otodectes*, feline *Demodex* mites

**Fecal flotation:** May find *Sarcoptes*, fleas, feline *Demodex* mites

**Hair plucking:** May find feline *Demodex* mites

**KOH preparations:** Optimized if Wood's-positive hairs are examined for dermatophyte spores

**Cytologic ear evaluation:** *Malassezia*, bacteria

**Impression smears:** *Malassezia* or bacterial pyoderma is a clinical diagnosis and cytologic evaluation may not always show PMNs and cocci; impression smears may show eosinophilic inflammation in parasitic and/or allergic patients.

**Dermatophyte culture:** Not always necessary as core test in adult dogs, but always recommended in cats and pediatric patients with pruritus.

### ADVANCED DIAGNOSTIC TESTS

**Allercept E-Screen 2nd Generation Test (heska.com):** Use after other diagnostics have ruled out flea-allergy dermatitis and other parasitic skin diseases, and clinical diagnosis has been narrowed to food allergy and/or atopy. Negative test indicates one of the following: wrong diagnosis (not atopic—ie, food allergy or other) or dog not candidate for serum in vitro test. Positive test does not rule out food allergy but indicates that either intradermal skin testing or serum in vitro test can be used to identify allergens.

**Intradermal skin testing:** Identification of important allergens in patients with clinical diagnosis of atopy

**Food trial:** Novel protein diet or hydrolyzed protein diet coupled with positive provocative trial rules in or out food sensitivity. Important to rule out parasitic and infectious disease and flea-allergy dermatitis first. Food trial must be strict—no table scraps, dog treats, rawhide chew toys, etc. Food trials are indicated in pets with year-round pruritus; if signs are seasonal, pursue diagnostic testing for atopy.

**Skin biopsy:** Indicated in any patient with unusual and/or nonresponsive skin lesions. Most helpful to rule out neoplastic and immune-mediated causes of pruritus.

**Complete blood count, serum chemistry panels, and urinalysis are generally not helpful in diagnosing the cause of pruritus.**