

Talking Animals ~ South Coast Vet Care

ANAL GLANDS

There are two anal glands located on either side of the anus. They produce a brownish tinged watery secretion that has an offensive (to us!) odour. The glands are situated in the anal muscles so that every time the animal passes faeces, the muscles also express the anal glands, there by depositing their 'scent' on the stool.

Dogs, in particular, pay a lot of attention to stools deposited around the neighbourhood and keep up to date with whose stool is whose by sniffing each other's anal region each meeting. The anal glands have no vital function apart from this 'social' role.

My dog is scooting on his bottom but I worm him regularly

Certainly worm eggs deposit around the anus and tapeworm segments that actually crawl from the anus cause irritation and scooting. For that reason, all animals that start scooting should be wormed immediately, especially if they have not been done regularly (3 monthly). Sometimes an allergy or other lesion may be the cause of the scooting. *However, most dogs scoot because they have inflamed, blocked, infected or abscessed anal glands.*

What causes anal gland disease?

The exact cause will differ with each case, however there are several predisposing factors that can lead to anal gland blockage and/or infection. Many affected anal glands will rupture, causing intense cellulitis and subsequent abscessation and sinus formation.

Predisposing factors include:

- A recent bout of diarrhoea or **chronically** soft faeces,
- Seborrhoeaic (oily, scaly) dermatitis,
- Poor anal muscle tone associated with obesity,
- Smaller breeds, particularly toy breeds, have a much higher incidence of anal gland disease.
- Thickened, pasty anal gland secretions

How is anal gland disease treated?

In most cases, if the problem is caught early, all that is required is to have the glands expressed to relieve any blockage or to remove thickened material that the dog is physically unable to express itself. Manual expression of the anal gland is recommended for animals that are scooting.

Infection and abscess formation

Since the duct of the anal gland is located close to the external anal sphincter contamination with fecal bacteria is common. The infection resulting from bacterial contamination can be very painful. Signs can include excessive scooting, excessive licking, swelling, fever, and pain. If the infection persists, the gland can rupture. Treatment includes manual expression of the gland and antibiotics. Surgical removal may be recommended to prevent additional problems.

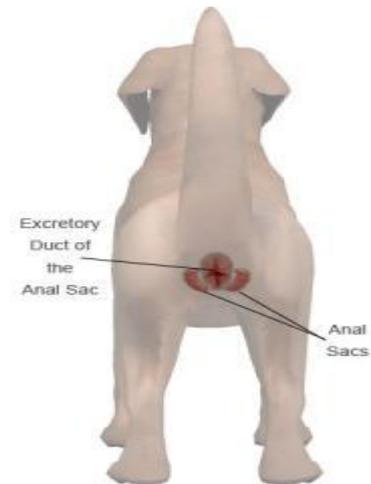
Can my dog have surgery to remove it's anal glands?

Yes. Many owners of dogs that scoot a lot request anal gland ablation surgery for their dogs to give them permanent relief. Owners of those cases that have resulted in abscessation are advised to consider anal gland ablation because the resultant damage or disfigurement to the gland predisposes it to recurrent problems. The surgery is performed approximately 6 weeks after any infection as been successfully treated.

How often do anal glands have to be expressed?

The frequency of expression will vary by animal. Initially, you may be asked to return in only 7-14 days. At this point, the next recommended visit depends on how much anal gland secretion has built up in that time.

Severe cases may at first, require frequent expressions where as most only require their anal glands expressed every 3 months or so.



If all you require is your dogs anal glands expressed, you will only be charged this fee (that is, no additional consultation fee). This is to encourage owners to seek our assistance before any serious problems arise.

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