

ANAL GLANDS



If you have any further queries regarding the welfare of your pet, please do not hesitate to ask a member of staff

We are happy to assist!

What are anal sacs?

The anal sacs are located on either side of the anus at the 8:00 and 4:00 positions; they are positioned just within the anal sphincter muscle. They connect to the anus by means of small canals or ducts. Anal sacs produce and store a dark, foul-smelling fluid. These are the same type of organs that a skunk has to scare away its enemies. Although dogs can use these for the same purpose, most dogs live in an environment that has no enemies. Because the sacs are rarely emptied, the fluid builds up, solidifies, and becomes an ideal environment in which bacteria can grow.

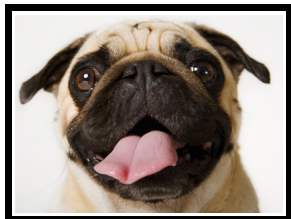
What disorders can occur in the anal sacs?

There are 3 diseases that occur in the anal sacs:

1. Impaction- when the fluid becomes thick and solidified.
2. Infection- when bacteria grow in this material producing a yellow or bloody pus.
3. Abscess- when the infection builds to create a hot, tender swelling in the sac, it often bursts.



Abscesses of the Anal Sacs



How will I know if my dog is having problems with its anal sacs?

Symptoms of anal sac disease are:

1. Scooting or dragging their bottom along the ground.
2. Excessive licking around the tail.
3. Pain, sometimes severe, near the tail or anus.
4. A swollen area on either side of the anus.
5. Bloody or sticky drainage on either side of the anus.

How are the various anal sac diseases treated?

The treatment for impaction is to express (squeeze out) the sacs and clean out the solidified material. For infection, the sacs must be expressed and antibiotics administered to kill the bacteria. If the sacs abscess, they may need surgical draining by your veterinary surgeon and require antibiotic treatment.

My dog has had several bouts of anal sac disease. Is there a long-term cure?

Many dogs have recurrent anal sac disease. Some breeds of dogs, such as Poodles, commonly have problems. The anal sacs of obese dogs do not drain well, and thus these dogs are predisposed to recurrent problems. If a dog has several bad episodes of anal sac disease, the anal sacs can be removed surgically.

Are there any complications of the surgery?

Surgery requires general anaesthesia which always carries a small degree of risk. However, modern anaesthetics make this risk very minimal for dogs that are otherwise healthy.

Some dogs will experience lack of bowel control. This occurs because the nerves that control the anus are very near the anal sacs and may be damaged during surgery. However, this is almost always a temporary problem that will usually resolve in a few weeks.

My dog frequently leaves a foul-smelling drop of liquid on the furniture. Is this related?

Some dogs are born with anal canals that do not close well resulting in the ducts constantly draining anal sac fluid. These dogs leave a foul-smelling drop where they have been. There does not appear to be any way to stop this except removing the anal glands as these dogs do not outgrow this problem.

