

# Anal Glands

**A**nal glands are a normal part of anatomy for a dog and cat. Anal Glands are two scent glands located around the anus. They produce a strong-smelling, oily secretion. Normally the material inside a dog's anal glands is secreted as the anus is stretched when the animal passes a stool, or when the sphincter muscles squeeze the anal sacs during stress or excitement.

If the material in the gland is not emptied on a regular basis naturally, the consistency of the liquid secretion can become thick and plug the openings of the anal glands. Some animals naturally produce abnormally thick material as well. When this happens, the dogs and cats will experience discomfort or the glands may even become infected.

Anal gland issues are primarily found in canines. Cats seldom show specific signs of anal gland issues, but occasionally an older cat will develop problems and require treatment. The only noticeable clue from a cat may be that they tend to lick the area excessively. For a dog, the first sign you may notice when there is an issue with the glands is "scotching" on the floor. Your pet may also lick or chew at their rear. If no care is taken, many times the infected or impacted anal glands will rupture and produce a bloody discharge and wound near the anus.

If you are concerned and wonder if your pet's anal glands need emptied, ask our staff to check them. It is a simple procedure to check and empty the glands if they are not inflamed/infected. If the gland becomes infected or ruptures, more significant medical intervention will be necessary.

Unfortunately, some dogs have repeated issues with their anal glands. Surgical removal in these instances is an option. Our veterinarians can help you decide if your dog is a good candidate for this surgery.

You are welcome to discuss any questions or concerns with our veterinarians or technicians. Early treatment is always best, and knowing the symptoms can help avoid an abscess.