

ANAL SAC DISEASE

The **anal sacs** (glands) lie beneath the skin, on each side of the rectal opening. The anal sacs are lined with glands that produce a secretion with a strong odor. This is the same gland as the “scent gland” of the skunk. The only purpose for these glands in your pet is to help a veterinarian make a living! The secretion is normally discharged from the rectum with the stools or when the rectal muscle tightens--such as when the pet is frightened. If the canal emptying the gland does not close completely, the pet may leave foul-smelling fluid where they have been.

TYPES OF ANAL SAC DISEASE INCLUDE:

1. **IMPACTION:** Abnormal secretions are thick and unable to escape through the duct. This may result from a change in diet, or a change in the nature of the secretions. The sacs become swollen and painful.
2. **INFECTION: Bacteria Infection produces a thin, foul-smelling discharge.** Licking of these glands may cause other body infections, such as tonsillitis and skin infections.
3. **ABSCESS FORMATION.** If left untreated, infections may abscess resulting in a painful swelling filled with pus that cannot escape. Often the gland will burst from the pressure as the infectious discharge accumulates. Many pets are presented to us with a “hole” beside the rectum, which is a result of a bursting abscess.

SIGNS OF ANAL SAC DISEASE INCLUDE:

1. “Scooting” or dragging the rear-end on the floor or ground. A discharge may be seen on the floor.
2. Jerking around quickly to lick the tail area or excessive licking of the rectal area.
3. Reluctance to lift the tail or allow you to touch the rear-end.
4. Constipation.
5. Bloody drainage around the rectal area.

TREATMENT OF ANAL SAC DISEASE MAY INCLUDE:

1. Rectal palpation to empty the sacs of the secretions.
2. Lancing and/or debriding the infected gland.
3. Systemic antibiotics.
4. Anti-inflammatory medications.
5. **Surgical removal of the anal sacs** will prevent any future problem and should be considered in recurrent cases. It is recommended for consideration any time a pet has 3 episodes of anal gland problems within a one-year period.