

## *Why is my pet scooting?*

### What are anal glands?

Anal glands are two small sacs just inside your pet's anus. Anal gland material that is secreted into these glands is thick and foul-smelling.

Wild animals empty these glands voluntarily for scent marking or in self defense (like a skunk).

Domestic animals (dogs and cats) do not have the ability to empty these sacs voluntarily. Walking and normal defecation can serve to empty the glands, but some pets are unable to empty their glands on their own. The sacs become impacted and uncomfortable.

### Who has the problem?

Anal sac disorders are the most common problem of the anal area in dogs. Anal gland disease in cats is much less common than in dogs.

Anal sac disorders include impaction, sacculitis (infection), an abscess or anal sac rupture.

### Symptoms?

Dogs with impacted anal glands may scoot their rear end on the ground/carpet in an attempt to empty the sacs.

Other dogs will lick/chew the anal area or under the tail, strain to have a bowel movement or chase their tail.

Cats may lick the fur off just under their tail.

### Diagnosing problem

The first step is to correctly diagnose your pet's condition. Verifying that the anal sacs are the problem is the first step toward an appropriate treatment plan. This requires an examination by your veterinarian.

### Treatments

Manual expression of the anal sacs is necessary to remove impacted material and re-establish drainage. Sometimes flushing the anal sacs and/or antibiotics are necessary because of an infection.

Anal glands can be expressed two different ways in order to remove the excess anal gland material.

### External Expression

A tissue is placed over the anal gland area and the anal glands are squeezed. This can help with overflow of excess anal gland secretions but this method can be inadequate to fully empty the sacs.

This is the method generally performed by groomers and by people on their own pets at home.

### Internal Expression

A lubricated gloved finger is inserted into the anus and the sac is squeezed into a tissue held externally. This is generally how anal glands are expressed at a veterinary clinic. This allows for full evaluation of the anal glands.

### If scooting continues

If scooting continues for more than a few days after internal anal gland expression, they should be rechecked. It may take several sac emptyings to get the condition under control.

### Abscessed anal gland

An abscess can form and rupture through the skin if an impacted gland is not expressed. (Imagine a balloon that pops). This is painful condition that must be diagnosed and treated by your veterinarian. It requires flushing the area and systemic antibiotics.

### Surgical Intervention

If the sacs need to be emptied every few weeks or months, you may have the sacs permanently removed.

### Prevention

A high fiber diet can help anal glands empty easier—feed a spoonful of pumpkin daily or try the high fiber treat on page 1.

*If you have questions about your pet's specific medical condition, please contact our office.*