

Anal Sac Disease

Overview

The anal sacs are glands located near the anus (rectum) that produce secretions which are normally expressed during defecation. The secretions from these glands are normally foul-smelling and straw-colored with brown flecks. The normal function of these glands is to mark territory with a unique scent. Anal sac contents may also be expressed in times of fright producing a terrible odor in the area.

Dogs are more commonly affected with anal sac disease than cats, and small breed dogs are more commonly affected with anal sac impaction than large breed dogs. Older female dogs are more commonly affected with anal sac tumors.

Diagnosis and Treatment Notes:

- Anal sac disease is generally diagnosed by a thorough history and rectal examination. Bloodwork, abdominal x-rays and abdominal ultrasound may be recommended if an anal gland tumor is suspected.
- Treatment depends on the severity of the disease, your individual pet, and your veterinarian. Pets with anal sac disease may be treated with anal gland expression, antibiotics, or in chronic cases or tumors, surgical removal of the glands. Discuss treatment details when your pet is diagnosed with this condition.

What to Watch for*:

- Scooting
- Frequent licking of anal area or tail base
- Reluctance to sit or sitting asymmetrically to avoid pressure on the painful anal sac
- Straining to defecate, difficulty defecating, production of ribbon-like stools
- Painful swelling at the 4 o'clock or 8 o'clock locations around the anus



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