



Anal Glands

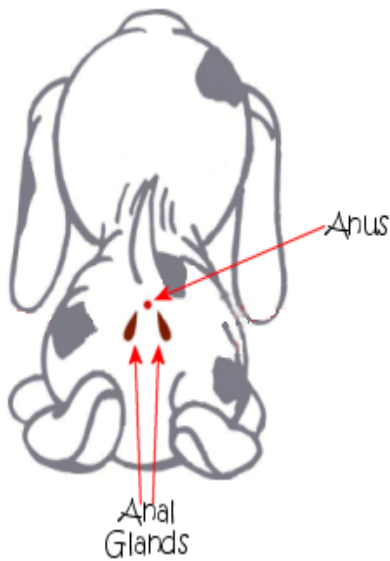


ANAL GLANDS are two small scent glands next to the anus in the dog and cat. These glands are responsible for producing a small amount of fluid each time they pass faeces. This fluid is a chemical MESSENGER to other animals to say 'I was here'! However, sometimes they do not empty naturally and they will become UNCOMFORTABLE as they fill up. Eventually they can become impacted, infected or abscessed which is very PAINFUL.

The incidence of anal gland problems will increase if your pet has not been eating or has diarrhoea. This is because there is no trigger for them to empty. Obesity is another factor as fat deposits can affect the position of the glands. The signs of anal gland discomfort include:-

- SCOOTING-dragging their bottom across the floor
- Fishy smell
- Biting at their tail or legs
- Tail carriage abnormal - very low and tucked under the body





If the anal glands are full, they will need to be manually EMPTIED. This can be done by the NURSE or the VET at the surgery, or we can show you how to do this at home. Full anal glands feel like two large peas one either side of the rectum. EMPTYING the anal glands involves gentle pressure to massage the

contents through the ducts and hopefully collected onto the waiting tissue – BEWARE it's a very offensive odour! The discharge from the glands should be watery- any thickness or blood in the discharge would be an indication of infection which requires medication. Repeated infections in the anal glands would suggest that perhaps the animal should be sedated and the anal glands flushed out. Untreated infections will lead to anal gland ABSCESSSES. These are very painful indeed! If the anal glands have to be emptied on a regular basis but are not infected, lifestyle changes should be considered; increasing fibre in the diet, weight loss or dietary supplementation may be necessary. In cases of frequent abscess, we may recommend surgical removal of the anal glands. It should be noted that this is only in extreme cases as faecal incontinence is a possible consequence of the surgery, thus not a decision to be taken lightly.

