



# Anal Sac Disease

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## WHAT ARE ANAL SACS?

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The anal sacs are small bean shaped structures located just inside the rectum near the anus, often referred to as anal glands, these sacs do contain glandular tissues that secrete a clear to brownish liquid upon normal defecation. The function of his secretion is unknown but may be involved in territorial / scent marking.

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## WHAT IS ANAL SAC DISEASE?

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Anal sac disease is most commonly seen in small breeds of dogs such as Poodles and Chihuahuas but can be seen in any breed or size of dog. It is occasionally seen in cats. There are three different forms of disease that we see; impaction, sacculitis and abscess formation. Signs seen in the three forms are very similar.

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## IMPACTION

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This is the most common manifestation of anal sac disease. The normally liquid secretions may become thicker and dryer, making it difficult if not impossible for the dog to express when having a bowel movement. Signs seen at this stage are related to pain and discomfort involving the anus. These include scooting, licking or biting at the anal area, painful or prolonged defecation, discomfort when sitting down, tail chasing and suddenly jumping up while at rest. Treatment at this stage is usually uncomplicated and involves the veterinarian manually expressing the anal sacs.

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## ABSCESS FORMATION

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An abscess occurs when the sac is very inflamed and infected and the material is unable to be expressed. The resultant swelling is visible to both the owner and the veterinarian. The area around the anus is red, hot and painful. There may also be a discharge from a ruptured sac.

Treatment of the abscess may involve the use of hot packs, lancing the sacs to allow drainage, local and systemic antibiotics and anti-inflammatories and daily therapy by the owner.

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## PREVENTION

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Prevention of anal sac disease is difficult because the underlying cause is unknown. Predisposing factors have been suggested and include generalized seborrhea (a condition where the skin is either too dry or too oily), improper diet, glands in the sac that are too active, poor muscle tone in the anal sphincters and breed predilection.

Disease unrelated to the anal sacs can cause similar or identical signs, therefore the value of a physical exam cannot be overstated. By evaluating your pets overall condition, the veterinarian can determine the best course of treatment and possible prevention in the future.

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### Signs Of Anal Sac Disease...

Scooting  
Licking/ Biting at the anal area  
Painful or prolonged defecation  
Discomfort when sitting down  
Tail Chasing  
Suddenly jumping while at rest

### Remember...

Don't assume that a scooting dog is not a problem. More often than not the dogs anal sacs are impacted and need to be expressed. Give us a call if you think your dog may have an anal sac problem.

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