

# CANINE ANAL GLANDS

Canine anal glands are sacs found just below the surface on either side of your dog's anus. They release an oily mix of fluids (it smells very bad, almost skunk-like.) Your dog can also express the glands when provoked or excited.

These glands can become impacted or infected. This can happen when a dog's stools are soft and mushy; they lack the firmness required to put proper pressure on the glands to express them. Bacteria can build up in the sacs and cause irritation or pain in your dog.

Signs that your dog is feeling irritation or pain:

- Scooting/dragging his/her bottom
- Excessive licking and chewing at the hindquarters
- Paranoid behavior: acting as if being stung or hiding behind/under furniture
- Bulges in the sac areas
- Drainage from the rectum
- One or more abscesses in the immediate area.

Consult a vet if you suspect an impaction or infection. You could damage the sacs and cause complications if you try to manage these at home.

You can do maintenance by manually expressing the glands. Be aware that this can be a delicate, stinky process, best done before a bath. Some dogs become uncomfortable and start fidgeting; it is useful to have a second person on hand to distract and help control the dog. External expression: Cover the rectum with a clean cloth and apply gentle pressure to the pea-sized lumps on either side at the 4 and 8 o'clock positions. A small amount of oily liquid should emerge, but sometimes the secretion will squirt out if the glands are particularly full. Internal expression: A lubricated, gloved finger is inserted in the anus, and the sac is squeezed between thumb & forefinger into a tissue held externally. The procedure is repeated on the opposite side. For both procedures: if the secretion is very pasty this method maybe inadequate to empty the sacs; follow up with a vet.

Not all dog experts agree that the anal glands should be interfered with in any way unless a dog is showing signs of a problem. An alternative to manual expression is to alter the diet. This can be in several ways, including the addition of high fiber treats or supplements.

Plain, canned pumpkin, 1-2 tbs, as a treat or mixed in with dry kibble or wet food. Daily or as needed.

Grape Nuts cereal, 1-3 tsp, smaller to larger dog dosage. Give several times a day. Add to kibble or wet food. Can be used daily or as needed.

Metamucil. ½ tsp for small dogs, up to 2 tsp for medium to large dog. Mix with warm water, let sit a few minutes to absorb. Mix with warm broth and add to kibble or wet food. Offer plenty of water so it doesn't congeal in the stomach. Use 2x daily or as needed.

Add fresh vegetables to the mix: carrots, bananas, pears, squash, peas, bran or a small amount of olive oil. Offer shredded wheat cereal bits or wheatabix crackers.

Further diet change: try a grain-free diet. Some dogs have allergies and a simple change in diet can relieve anal gland issues. This may take 3-6 weeks to notice a significant change.

For more information visit these websites

<http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/ClientED/anal.aspx>

<http://www.petplace.com/dogs/anal-glands-in-dogs-2/page1.aspx>

<http://www.veterinarypartner.com/Content.plx?P=A&S=0&C=0&A=625>