

# Dog Anal Gland FAQs

## Anal Glands in Dogs & Cats

### *What are anal glands?*

Anal glands are two small glands (often referred to as anal sacs) located inside the anal opening of all dogs and cats. These glands normally release a small amount of a foul-smelling scent marking fluid every time your pet defecates. Many pets develop anal gland problems at some point in their lifetime requiring veterinary attention.

### *What causes anal gland problems?*

Whenever the anal glands become blocked, over-filled, or inflamed it causes discomfort for your dog and can lead to further problems. Common reasons why your dog may be experiencing anal gland problems include soft or loose stools, digestive issues, allergies, infection, obesity, poor anatomy, or a combination of these things.

### *What are the symptoms of anal gland problems in dogs?*

Symptoms of anal gland problems will vary, however common signs that your dog may exhibit include the following scooting of the rear end on the floor, licking or chewing beneath the tail, a sudden foul fishy odour or leakage, and/or redness or swelling near the anal area.

### *What are the symptoms of anal gland problems in cats?*

Symptoms of anal gland problems in cats are typically less obvious but may include straining to defecate and/or defecating outside of the litter box.

### *When should I be concerned or see my veterinarian?*

If your pet is experiencing any signs of anal gland problems, you should consult with your veterinarian immediately as anal gland problems left unchecked can develop into further problems including infection or abscess. If your pet's anal glands are full then they will need to be emptied by your veterinarian. If there are signs of infection, your vet may prescribe medications including antibiotics.

### *What can be done to prevent anal gland problems?*

Using [Glandex®](#) regularly helps to support healthy anal gland function as it is specifically designed for anal gland problems in dogs and cats. Along with using Glandex® it is important to feed your pet a consistent and high-quality diet free from excessive fillers. It is also important to maintain your pet's ideal weight as overweight pets tend to have more problems emptying their anal glands. Working with your veterinarian to resolve any underlying causes of your dog's anal gland problems such as allergies or digestive issues is also key. In the most severe cases the anal glands may need to be surgically removed but this should only be considered as a last resort due to the risks of fecal incontinence, infection, and general surgical risks.

*Is it helpful to have my dog's anal glands emptied often?*

Generally speaking your dog's anal glands should only be manually emptied (or "expressed") when needed. Expressing the anal glands too often can lead to further irritation of the anal glands. Therefore it is best for the anal glands to empty naturally when your pet defecates. With that said, if the anal glands are blocked or overfilled they may not be able to empty on their own, thus requiring expressing by a veterinarian.

