



Anal Gland Surgery (Anal Sacculectomy)

Dogs and cats have anal glands on either side of their anus, located around 4 and 8 o'clock. They produce a brownish tinged watery secretion that has an offensive fishy odour. The glands are situated in the anal muscles and normally are expressed every time the animal defaecates, thereby depositing their 'scent' on their stool.

Anal glands have no vital function apart from allowing animals to mark their territory with this scent and it is the reason why dogs sniff each others bottoms.

Why?

There are a number of reasons why your pet might have to have its anal glands removed. The main reason we find is because they are coming in regularly to be expressed. Most pets don't like this and if it is going to be a life long process then surgery can be curative.

Dogs in particular can leak anal gland material when they become excited, or even when they are really relaxed and asleep in severe cases. The secretion and subsequent odour is then deposited on the dogs bedding, or even your couch or carpet, or your clothes. The third reason is because of infections or abscesses. Because of the poor blood supply to the anal glands once an infection develops it can be very hard to clear it and most reoccur and hence surgery is often needed to clear the problem.

What is involved?

There are a number of methods for

performing an anal sacculectomy.

Our surgeons prefer to use a method which relies on very fine dissection of the anal gland away from the external anal sphincter muscle. Utilising this method we remove the entire gland and the duct so that no further material can be produced.

Whilst we do have to make an incision into the muscle to get to the gland, it is a sharp incision and will produce minimal scar tissue and hence not affect the overall function of the muscle.

The area is then sutured internally to close the muscle and then the skin is sutured closed with absorbable intradermal sutures, so that there are no sutures on the outside to irritate your pets bottom whilst they are healing.

One of the main concerns that owners have is Faecal incontinence.

Because of the method that we are using there is no risk of damaging anything that we shouldn't.

Previous methods were not so safe and consequently some dogs ended up with a degree of incontinence.

It is not uncommon for dogs to drop the odd stool a few days after surgery as there is some pain associated with clenching their bottom tight but this will normally settle quite quickly.

In the near 20 years of performing this surgery, we have not had a single case who has had any issues with incontinence post surgery.

Post surgery

As mentioned above we can often see them drop the odd nugget of poo in the first few days but this should pass.

When they come home they will still need to have an Elizabethan collar on as we don't want them licking the area.

There will be no external sutures to see. If the area is dirty it can be gently wiped with warm salty water (1 tsp salt in 500 mls Water).

It is really important to just feed them their normal diet, we don't want them having diarrhea either, just their normal soft stools. If you feel that they have particularly hard stools normally then please mention this to the nurse at admit time.

It is also important to not feed them anything hard, such as bones, rawhide or pig or beef ears as this may cause pain when defaecating. They will be able to go back to eating these things once healing is complete. They will be placed on a few days pain relief to help with any discomfort.

We recommend a 10 days post surgery check to see that it has all healed as planned.

It is important to note, as there can often be multiply reasons why a dog is scooting. When animals are scooting, they are trying to scratch their bottoms. Anything that causes an itchy bottom will lead to scooting, and anal gland irritation is one of these.

Post surgery they may still have an itchy bottom from other causes and scoot, but they can never again have impacted, infected or leaking anal glands.