

Anal Sacculitis

Dermatology Service



VETERINARY
MEDICAL CENTER

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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What is anal sacculitis?

Anal sacculitis is an inflammatory disease of the anal sacs (normal anatomic structures located on the sides of the anus). It occurs due to swelling or inflammation of the perianal/anal region and is often associated with an infection. This problem may result from several causes including soft stool, diarrhea, perianal fistula and allergies. Symptoms may include scooting, licking or biting the anal region, frequent anal sac expressions, straining/pain to defecate, bleeding and malodor. If anal sacculitis is not treated, severe discomfort can persist and an abscess (a red swelling with pus and blood that can drain through the skin) can occur. Anal sacculitis is not a serious illness and most patients improve with proper treatment, however, some patients have recurrent disease and may need surgical removal of the anal sacs (sacculotomy).

How is anal sacculitis diagnosed?

The veterinarian reviews the history, your pet's clinical signs and examines the anal region and palpates the anal sacs. Their content is expressed and evaluated for abnormalities such as blood and pus. Sometimes, cytology and bacterial culture may be needed. If your pet is very painful or does not allow exam, he/she will likely need to be sedated.

How is anal sacculitis treated?

The treatment is done by the veterinarian at the clinic. Because of pain/discomfort, most patients need to be sedated for this procedure. After expression, the anal sacs are flushed with sterile saline. After flushing, the affected anal sac(s) is/are infused with a medication containing steroid and antimicrobials. Oral antibiotics and anti-inflammatory drugs are usually not needed.

How many times and how often is the treatment performed?

We recommend re-evaluation and repeating the anal sac treatment in another 2 weeks. Most patients only need 2-3 treatments; however, some patients require more treatments. The veterinarian will decide how many procedures are needed based on how your pet is doing and the evaluation of the anal sac(s) material, which will be important to prevent relapses.

How should I prepare my pet for the procedure?

Most pets will need sedation to allow a thorough examination and treatment and to avoid any discomfort that may be associated with the procedure. Your pet should be fasted for 12-24 hours prior to the procedure and should defecate as close as possible to the scheduled visit to reduce presence of fecal material during the procedure. If your pet needs sedation, the veterinarian may also recommend pre-anesthetic bloodwork.

Are there any complications with these procedures?

The anal sac treatment is usually a safe and relatively quick procedure. Although sedation, when performed, can pose some risks to your pet, we use a reversible sedative and monitor our patients closely during sedation.

*If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact us directly at the **Dermatology Service** at **612-624-4831** or **vetderm@umn.edu**. For after hours, urgent or emergency needs please call **612-626-8387**.*

Thank you for your trust in us with the care of your precious companion.