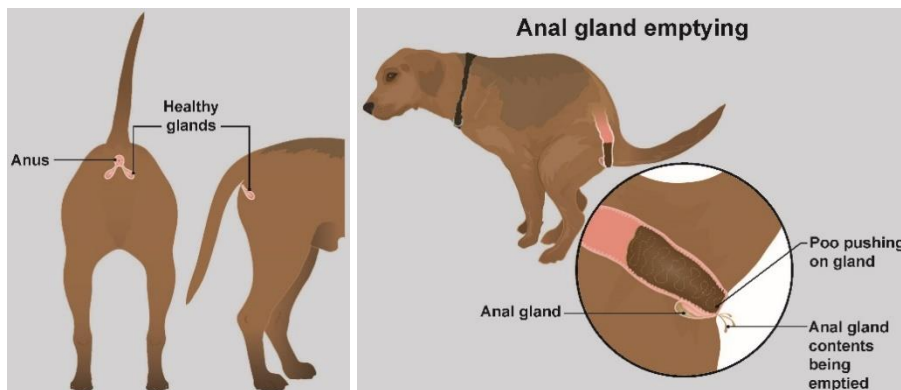


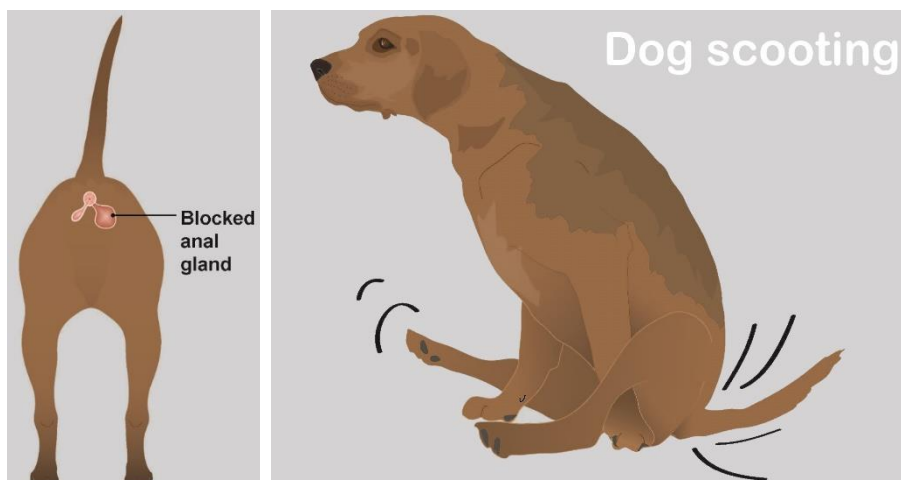
## Blocked anal glands in dogs

### Overview

The anal glands are two small sacs that sit just inside your dog's anus (bottom). They contain a strong-smelling liquid that's emptied onto their stool when they go to the toilet. This smelly liquid helps your dog mark its territory.



Sometimes anal glands become blocked which causes irritation and pain. The most common sign of blocked anal glands is scooting (your dog rubbing their bottom on the ground).



Contact your vet if you think your dog has an anal gland problem. Blocked anal glands can usually be cured by careful emptying. Blocked anal glands left untreated can lead to infections and abscesses. If your dog suffers from blocked anal glands regularly, your vet may suggest a diet change and regular emptying.

## Symptoms

Symptoms of blocked anal glands:

- Scooting - rubbing their anus (bottom) on the ground
- A red, swollen bottom
- Excessive biting or licking around their bottom or base of the tail
- Pain/crying out when pooing
- Sitting down or looking round very suddenly
- A foul (usually fishy) smell around their bottom

## What causes blocked anal glands?

The following factors make blocked anal glands more likely:

### Obesity

- Overweight dogs often have weaker muscles around their bottom. This makes gland emptying more difficult.

### Diarrhoea

- If your dog has regular diarrhoea, the soft poo doesn't press on the glands to empty them.

### Narrow gland openings

- Some dogs are born with narrow anal gland openings which makes emptying more difficult.

## Diet

- The food your dog eats can affect whether their stools are firm enough to empty their anal glands naturally.

## When to contact your vet

Contact your vet if your dog has any of these symptoms. Leaving anal gland issues untreated can lead to more serious problems such as anal gland infections and abscesses.

Check out our video: 'How to recognise anal gland problems in dogs' [www.pdsa.org.uk/blockedanalglandsindogs](http://www.pdsa.org.uk/blockedanalglandsindogs)

**You know your dog best. If they don't have the symptoms listed above but you notice a change in behaviour and are concerned, contact your vet.**

## Treatment for blocked anal glands

### Emptying

- In most cases your vet will be able empty your dog's anal glands by gentle squeezing. This should get rid of any irritation or pain.
- Unless you have been shown how to empty anal glands by your vet, do not attempt to do this yourself. Anal glands can burst if they are squeezed too hard or in the wrong way.

### Medication

- Medication isn't usually needed for a simple blockage.
- If your dog is diagnosed with an anal gland infection or abscess they may need pain relief, anti-inflammatory or antibiotic medication.

### **Surgery**

- If your dog's anal glands are very difficult or painful to empty your vet may recommend admitting them to the veterinary hospital so they can be emptied and flushed under anaesthetic.

## **Will my dog's anal glands keep blocking?**

If your dog has had blocked anal glands in the past, it is likely to happen again. It's important to discuss with your vet how to prevent problems.

## **Preventing blocked anal glands**

### **Leave them alone unless there is a problem**

- Healthy anal glands don't need regular emptying. Unless you notice a problem you shouldn't have your dog's anal glands examined or emptied (even at the groomers).

### **Regular emptying**

- Have your dog's anal glands emptied by a vet or nurse as regularly as your vet suggests and book your dog in for a visit to your vet if you notice problems between appointments.
- Some dogs need their anal glands emptying every now and then, others may need appointments every 4-6 weeks.

### **Keep your dog slim**

- Keep your dog a healthy weight and feed them a good quality complete dog food.

## Fibre

- Your vet may suggest adding extra fibre to your dog's diet to help firm up and bulk out their poo. If a stool is firm and solid, it presses on the glands and helps them empty easily.
- Your vet can advise you which type of fibre to add to your dog's food.

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