

Enlarged, inflamed anal sac      Ruptured anal sac abscess



## **Anal Sac Abscess**

### **Diagnostic Plan**

History  
Physical examination  
Abscess culture

### **Therapeutic Plan**

Lancing of the abscess  
Anal sac expression  
Hot soaks  
Antiseptic solutions  
Antibacterials  
Anal sac removal

### **Nutritional Plan**

Postsurgically, nutrition  
adequate for tissue repair

## **Anal Sac Abscess**

Your pet has an anal sac abscess. Anal sac abscesses are painful infections of one or both of the small saclike structures on either side of your pet's anus. Anal sac abscesses are treated with surgical drainage and antibiotics. This client education sheet will help you learn more about anal sac abscesses and will review your veterinarian's instructions for your pet's care at home, as well as follow-up with the veterinary health care team.

### **What You Should Know About Anal Sac Abscess**

The anal sacs of dogs and cats are two structures located near the anus. They are normally  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. to 1 in. long and are connected to the anus by narrow ducts. The walls of the anal sac contain glands that secrete a foul-smelling brown liquid. Bowel movements normally empty the anal sacs as the stool moves through the anus. Infection of the anal sac leads to formation of abscess. Anal sac disorders are more common in dogs, but they can also occur in cats.

#### **Signs**

Frequently, you will notice a red, raised, hairless area to the side of and slightly below the anus. Some anal sac abscesses rupture spontaneously, producing an open sore with a watery yellow-green discharge. Pain is usually present; some pets may refuse to have a bowel movement or cry out when a stool is passed.

## Causes

Bacterial infection of the anal sac causes abscesses to form.

## Diagnosis

Anal sac abscesses are diagnosed by your veterinarian when he or she examines the tissues surrounding the anus. Sometimes a culture is taken and sensitivity studies are performed to determine the type of bacteria present and the antibiotics needed to treat the infection.

## Treatment and Home Care

Once the abscess is mature, your veterinarian will anesthetize your pet and lance and drain the abscess. The abscess cavity will then be irrigated with antiseptic solutions, and, if necessary, dead tissues will be removed. Your veterinarian will also make sure that the duct that empties into your pet's anus is open.

If your pet has chronic and repeated episodes of anal sac disease or abscesses, your veterinarian may recommend surgical removal of the anal sacs. This procedure is usually not performed until after the infection subsides and tissues heal.

Home care consists of giving all prescribed medications and checking the wound at least twice a day. Your veterinarian may instruct you to apply warm compresses to the anal sac area twice daily to relieve inflammation and pain. You should check your pet often to make sure it doesn't traumatize the wound by excessive biting and chewing. Your veterinarian has special collars that can be applied to help prevent self-mutilation.

## Dietary Plan

Your veterinarian may give you special feeding instructions while your pet's anal sac abscess heals. Surgical patient may benefit from foods with increased levels of protein and energy during the recovery process. Such foods include Hill's® Prescription Diet® Canine p/d® and Feline p/d®.

After your pet's anal sac abscess heals, your veterinarian may suggest a dietary change based on your pet's age and body condition, and on the presence or absence of disease in other organs and body systems. Optimal nutrition provides for a pet's needs based on age and activity level, but more important, reduces the health risks associated with feeding excess sodium, calcium, phosphorus, protein, and calories. Foods that avoid these harmful excesses and provide proper nutrition for each life stage include the Hill's® Science Diet® brand of dietary pet foods for dogs and cats.

## Transitioning Food

Unless recommended otherwise by your veterinarian, gradually introduce any new food over a seven-day period. Mix the new food with your pet's former food, gradually increasing its proportion until only the new food is fed.

If your pet is one of the few that doesn't readily accept a new food, try warming the canned food to body temperature, hand feeding for the first few days, or mixing the dry food with warm water (wait ten minutes before serving). However, do not add water to your cat's food. Feed only the recommended food. Do not feed additional salt or any snacks that may contain sodium. Be patient but firm with your pet. This is important because the success or failure of treatment depends to a large degree on strict adherence to the new food.

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## Home Care Instructions

Client's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Patient's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Medication(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Nutritional Recommendation: \_\_\_\_\_

Follow-Up Appointment: \_\_\_\_\_

(Hospital Stamp Area Above)

REGULAR VISITS WILL HELP OUR VETERINARY HEALTH CARE TEAM PROVIDE FOR YOUR PET'S BEST INTEREST.