



# Navarro Small Animal Clinic

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## Scooting Dogs- Anal Glands

By: Dr. Shana Bohac

A frequent complaint we have from our clients is that their pet is scooting. There are several potential causes of scooting including worms, impacted or inflamed anal glands, allergies, or constipation. One of the first things we rule out is impacted or inflamed anal glands. This is a regular occurrence in our furry friends.

Anal sacs are located between the external and internal muscles of the anal sphincters. The gland has two functions; its primary function is for identification for other dogs and cats. It's their own personal scent, that's why you see dogs smelling each other's rear ends. Usually the dogs meeting each other for the first time will raise their tail and slightly express their anal glands. They also slightly express their anal glands when passing stool as a form of claiming their territory. The other function is to lubricate passing stool. Most water absorption in the body takes place in the intestine so it is not uncommon if the stool is pretty compact.

The substance secreted from the anal gland can vary greatly in color and consistency depending on the length of time since the gland was last emptied naturally or manually. We have seen colors from white to black and everything in between. The same with the consistency, some is liquid while others can be gritty or even toothpaste-like in appearance. There's no mistake the smell with anal gland expressions. They can be described as putrid, foul, rotten, etc. That is actually perfectly normal in dogs. Dogs have a sense of smell far superior than ours; they can whiff out if the aroma came from a male/female or if a female is in heat.

Anal glands that have not been expressed as frequently as needed can lead to very bad infections of the anal gland itself. The gland can get filled to the point where it actually ruptures inside the abdominal cavity or through the skin near the rectum. If caught early these can be treated with anti-inflammatories for pain and inflammation and antibiotics to treat the ongoing infection. In more severe or ongoing cases the only way to fix this problem is to completely remove the anal gland.

Expressing your pet's anal glands is not as complicated as you think, it's actually quite easy. With proper training you can do it all on your own once you see that your pet is needing some help. Signs that your pet's anal glands need to be expressed include scooting, but can also consist of licking at their rear end, whining while defecating, or a very foul smell coming from the bum. The next time you bring him into your family vet ask the veterinarian or technicians to show you the proper technique on how to safely express anal glands.