

SURGEON ON SITE – ANAL SACCULECTOMY

Your vet has arranged for us to see your pet to perform a surgical procedure called an anal sacculectomy where the anal sacs/glands are removed from their location beside the anus. Anal sacculectomy is normally recommended following anal sac impaction, recurrent or persistent anal sac infection or sometimes because of development of cancer on or beside the anal sacs. This information sheet provides you with some further information about the surgical procedure and recovery.

The anal sacs are paired and are located beside the anus at either side. Each sac has an opening into the wall of the anus beside the anal sphincter. The sacs produce and store secretions which are normally emptied into the anus during defecation.

Most problems with the anal sacs occur secondary to gland inflammation/infection or obstruction of the duct through which they empty. These normally result in similar signs of persistent discomfort around the bottom, 'scooting' (dragging the bottom along the ground), and self-traumatising/chewing around the bottom. There is also often a persistent bad smell from this area. Often these problems will recur or persist despite treatment and surgical removal of the anal sacs can allow resolution from these symptoms.

In some cases the anal sacs may form abscesses which can occasionally rupture through the skin beside the bottom. These cases are best treated medically initially and a period of healing is required before surgery is possible after abscessation of the sacs. This is to allow more normal anatomy to be restored to reduce the risk of surgical complications.

Surgery involves a small incision beside the bottom over each sac. The sac is carefully dissected free from between the two muscles of the anal sphincter and then removed from its opening into the anus. In some circumstances a gel may be inserted into the sac to aid identification. In most cases both anal sacs will be removed at the same time.

RISKS: Anal sacculectomy surgery carries a risk of potential complications due to the location of the surgical site:

- The surgical wounds are at increased risk of infection during recovery owing to their potentially contaminated surroundings. This is normally treatable with antibiotics and should resolve.
- Rarely, abscessation or formation of a draining tract can occur if all traces of the sac are not completely removed during surgery, which can sometimes be difficult to ensure, particularly following a previous episode of abscessation.
- Temporary faecal incontinence is not uncommon following surgery due to swelling and discomfort around the bottom – this will normally resolve within a few days or sometimes weeks.
- However, the procedure carries a small but unavoidable risk of damage to the anal sphincter muscles or nerves which can result in permanent faecal incontinence. While this is a rare occurrence, it remains a recognised risk of this procedure.

AFTERCARE: We will aim to only use buried, dissolving stitches but occasionally skin stitches may be needed to give a tidy result. If there are skin stitches these should be removed after 10-14 days. If the area becomes soiled with faeces then please use a shower attachment to gently wash the area and pat dry with a towel. You should monitor the wounds for any signs of excessive redness, swelling or discharge which might indicate an infection.

Your pet will be discharged with some antibiotics, pain relief and some bulking laxative. You can get the laxative from the chemist (Nutrifyba/Fybagel or similar) and put a teaspoon of the powder on each meal.

Patients are expected to go home on the same day as surgery. They can be uncomfortable around their bottom for the first few days although the painkilling medication provided should help to resolve this.

Due to the delicate surgery site, it is vital that patients wear a buster collar (or similar) to prevent them from self-traumatising the area. This should be maintained until the wounds are fully healed.

Thank you for entrusting the care of your pet to us and I look forward to speaking to you on the day of the surgery.

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RCVS Advanced Practitioner in Small Animal Surgery**