**Everything you never wanted to know about anal glands**

Dogs and cats have small glands in the anus that secrete musky liquid. Generally a small amount is excreted each time there is a bowel movement. Likely pheromones in the liquid serve to convey information about the individual to others who might investigate the pile later—like leaving a calling card. Sometimes when animals are really nervous or scared, they will secrete anal gland juice spontaneously. The smell resembles something between dead fish, musk, and feces, and is sometimes very faint or other times overpowering.

Dogs and cats will sometimes rub their rump on the ground when their glands are getting too full, in an effort to express and empty them. When really full, the glands can make it difficult to pass stool normally. Sometimes bulges next to the rectum are visible when the glands are really full. The secretion inside the glands can become very thickand paste-like.

[Anal glands](http://www.examiner.com/topic/anal-glands/articles) often must be manually drained by a veterinarian or groomer. If your pet has anal gland issues, seek treatment at a vet clinic. Anal glands that are too full can rupture or abscess. Feeding high fiber foods such as vegetables or canned pumpkin can help by bulking up the size of stool that passes through and simultaneously empties the glands. Some pets need routine assistance cleaning out their glands. Remember, if your dog or cat rubs their bottom on the ground noticeably, they may need a little help from their friend.