

### **Atopy and Anal Sac Disease Are the Same**

Dogs & cats have scent (anal) sacs or openings located at 4 & 8 o'clock on the rectal area. These sacs were originally used to give scent markings. Skunks use them for self-defense. Every time the rectal area contracts as in barking, defecation or excitement, some contents spill out, marking the animal's territory. Since man has fed his pets more grain and prepared foods, these sacs don't function as they would if the pet had firmer stools from eating more natural foods.

Originally in Southern California, my purpose in designing this anal sac surgery was to increase the human – animal bond, by making our pets more socially acceptable with less offensive odor in our homes.

In 1977 I was preparing a dog for anal gland surgery, when I first saw a tapeworm segment come out of the rectum, enter and disappear into the anal sac canal. Since then I have paid special attention to the contents of anal sacs. Also, since then I have included emptying anal sacs as a routine part of an initial puppy or kitten exam, to show the reason for odor from anal sacs, and emphasizing the increased human animal bond when anal sacs are not present. In doing this, I have diagnosed many cases of anal sac infection, along with finding tapeworm segments in the contents. My first connection between ears and anal sac infection was in the late 1970's when I was presented with a 12-week old Sheltie puppy with 1 single pustule with a green discharge on a pinna and the same green discharge from one anal sac. I might mention fleas were year round and more numerous years ago, when all we had were dips, powders, shampoos, and flea combs for flea control. Very often when examining newborn pups and kittens, I would find fleas on their tongues when checking for cleft palates. I have also observed tapeworms in anal sacs and anal sac infections in puppies and kittens as early as 3 – 4 weeks of age.

After opening and removing 6000+ anal sacs in the last 30+ years, and finding hair, carpet fibers, pieces of bone, glass, sand, gravel, plastic, toothpicks, pine needles, tinsel, grass and fox tails, I have come to the conclusion that the tape worm is the **#1 cause of anal sac infection in the dog and cat**. In 1999 I observed as many as *17 tapeworm segments in one anal sac*, when emptying one before surgery. I have also reached another conclusion: anal sac disease is

synonymous with atopy and the #1 source of allergy in dogs and cats. Please refer to page 116 in 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of Tilley & Smith 5 Minute Veterinary Consult for a complete overview of atopy. I have used anal sac removal as a means to treat many of the conditions described in the effects of atopy. Anal sac disease causes increased secretion, severe itching and enough irritation to drive dogs and cats to psychoses and mania to lick, scratch, and chew to the extent of self-destruction. I believe this disease is transmitted from mother to offspring via licking pups' and kittens' rectal areas to keep them clean and in turn licking their own rectal areas. Any infection in the anal sac is spread by way of tongue to feet to any part of the body. Genetics is therefore not a factor in this disease.

It is my speculation that the anal sacs are producers of histamine plus being a reservoir of organisms that goes untouched by systemic treatments.

I admit that research needs to be done along these lines of thought and I challenge my colleagues to advance this field of knowledge. I also believe that much of the research in dermatology and behavior has been flawed by not taking into account the effects of anal sac disease. It is my belief that with a simple effective technique for removal of anal sacs, more research will be forthcoming. I gave a slide program in 1980 to the Orange County, CA veterinary meeting and video programs to California Orangebelt Veterinary Medical Association on this subject in 1998. I would be happy to have further discussions and presentations with interested groups.

I remove anal sacs with an electro-surgical technique I first used in 1977. I had used other techniques for anal sac removal, and found all to be too tedious, bloody, and prone to complications. A machine that has a combination Cut-Coag setting works best. I have found my method to be an effective, efficient and affordable way to prevent disease and increase the human animal bond in dogs and cats.

**My method is as follows:**

The pet is anesthetized and anal area prepared for surgery. I use a Surgitron Vet model F.F.P.F.EMC by Ellman International. A probe is placed in each sac. With a needle at setting: Cut Coag, power 3, an incision is made along the probe to the lowest portion of the sac. Check the incision and stop bleeders with setting: Cut - Coag #3, using a small ball electrode. A forceps is attached to the deepest wall of the sac to invert it to the outside of the incision.

The ball is then used to cauterize the mucosal lining of the anal sac and canal. After checking that all mucosa is destroyed, the sac is returned to its original location. There are no skin sutures used. The incision is allowed to heal by 2<sup>nd</sup> intention healing, which usually is completed in 10 days. Choose a cat or dog with good pigmentation in the mouth, so the anal sac lining will very likely be well pigmented. This will make it easier to determine the depth of destruction to remove the pigmented mucosal layer. There is no need to go any deeper. Total surgery time is 5 minutes for both sacs, with experience.

**I have had NO complications from fecal incontinence or strictures with this technique.**

Here is a list of 23 conditions associated with OR should include anal sac disease as a rule - out:

Acral Lick Dermatitis	Otitis Externa and Media
Alopecia – Cat, Alopecia – Dog	Otitis Media and Interna
Atopy	Perianal Fistulas
Compulsive Disorders Cats, Compulsive Disorders Dogs	Pododermatitis
Eosinophilic Granuloma Complex	Pruritis
Feline Symmetrical Alopecia	Red Eye
Flea Bite Allergy	Stomatitis
Food Reactions	Third Eyelid Prolapse
Gingivitis	Human Animal Bond
Halitosis	Asthma, Bronchitis
	Autoimmune Disease

I am not employed, have no affiliation with and have received no remuneration from Ellman International.

