

Remove Dog's Malfunctioning Anal Glands

After antibiotics and expression, surgery is only option for dog's troubled glands.

By Jon Geller, DVM

Q. Madi is a 3-year-old English Springer Spaniel. About a year ago she started having a semi-clear discharge from her rear end. It smelled unbelievably bad! It happens about every two weeks. It's consistent, and it is usually only a small amount of fluid, but it is the worst smell you can imagine.

Our vet in Minnesota said it was her anal gland. She said she cleared it. However, the problem has persisted. We moved to Arizona, and the discharge has continued. We have spent several hundred dollars at the vet. She has taken antibiotics, which didn't help at all. The vet has no idea what it could be. Any ideas?

A. Anal gland secretions certainly fit with your description of "unbelievably bad." Undoubtedly that is what you are smelling. These glands individually mark a dog's feces, so other dogs in the neighborhood know who has been around.

It sounds like Madi's anal glands are either infected or malfunctioning, and if antibiotics and manual emptying have not worked, they should be surgically removed. This is an advanced surgery that only experienced veterinarians should perform. Potential complications include permanent incontinence, so be careful about whom you select to perform the surgery.

Anal gland saccullectomy, as the surgery is called, is expensive, but it is a permanent fix for the problem. I am sure everyone in your family, and anyone else who is around Madi, will be appreciative.