What Are Cat Anal Glands?

Cat anal glands are two small glands located on either side of your cat’s rectal opening. Each gland holds a small amount of a noxious smelling brown liquid substance that your pet uses as something of a feline calling card.

**HOW ARE ANAL GLANDS USED?**

Whenever your cat urinates or defecates, the anal glands receive a small amount of pressure, and a tiny bit of fluid, is released, along with your cat’s custom blended scent. Your cat can also express a little of his personal essence when he meets a fellow feline. Typically upon meeting the cats will puff up their tails and shake them releasing a small amount of their anal glands. However, to our cats this behavior is as normal as shaking hands when you meet someone new. By expressing their anal glands, the cats learn to identify each other by their scents. Equate it with exchanging business cards, and you have the idea.

If you’re alarmed at this point about all this expressing going on, don’t be. Remember that a cat’s sense of smell is light years beyond our own, so the amount of the actual expressions are minute, and you’ll likely never smell anything yourself unless your cat develops an anal gland infection or impaction.

**Signs of anal gland problems**

If your cat’s anal glands fail to properly express, they may actually become impacted, making your cat very uncomfortable. Watch for these signs:

* Your cat begins scooting or dragging his rear across the floor.
* Your cat keeps licking or chewing near his rectum.
* Your cat’s tail is between his legs or acting as if it is broken.
* Your cat’s stools have become soft and mushy.
* You’ll likely notice a foul or “fishy” odor coming from your cat’s rear.

