

Anal Furunculosis (Perianal Fistulas)

Anal furunculosis is a condition characterized by chronic draining sinus tracts occurring around the anus and rectal tissues. The cause of anal furunculosis is unknown although an immune-mediated process has been suggested.

The German Shepherd Dog is most commonly affected but other dog breeds diagnosed with this condition are Irish Setters, Labrador Retrievers, Old English Sheepdogs, Border Collies, Bulldogs, English Setters, Dandie Dinmont Terrier, and mixed breeds.

The most common clinical sign is straining to defecate. Other symptoms include painful defecation, weight loss, matting of hair surrounding the anus, foul odor, diarrhea, and frequent licking of the anal area. The perineum is often very painful and many animals will have to be sedated in order to adequately evaluate the extent of the lesions. On physical examination

the anal area is often covered with a foul-smelling exudate and fecal material.

Also, there may be redness of the skin, shallow ulcers, and fistulous tracts.



Anal furunculosis is diagnosed based on history and clinical findings.

Cyclosporin taken orally has resulted in clinical improvement in 100% of cases and resolution of lesions in 83 to 100% of cases. Clinical improvement is generally seen within 2 weeks. Ketoconazole may be used in conjunction with cyclosporin to lower the dose of cyclosporin used and thus, the cost of the medication to the owner. There is a high recurrence rate of the condition once treatment is stopped so a maintenance regimen individualized to the patient is usually recommended. Additionally, an ointment containing 0.1% tacrolimus applied topically may prevent reoccurrence in some cases.

Due to the high cost of the cyclosporine an alternative treatment with a special diet, oral steroids, Sulfasalazine, and the tacrolimus ointment may be instituted.