Westover Hills
ANIMAL HOSPITAL

FIRST OWNERS VISIT
TAKE ME HOME



YOUR OWNER'S GUIDE

The Dog Pet Care Guide

Everything worth keeping in one place. The straight answers for the in-between, from the puppy and kitten chaos all the way through the gray-muzzle years.

Westover Hills Animal Hospital (210) 680-5243 Monday to Friday, 7:30 am to 5:30 pm

WELCOME

Pets make life better. Their care should be the easy part.



We put this guide together to keep the useful stuff in one easy place. The kind of things that come up between visits when you just want a straight answer. New puppy chewing everything in sight? Cat boycotting the litter box? Wondering if that lump after a vaccine is normal? It is in here.

Think of it as the in-between. For everything else, that is what we are here for.

What we're here for

We are a full-service animal hospital, which is a fancy way of saying we look after just about everything under one roof. Routine checkups and vaccines, parasite prevention, dental work, lab tests and diagnostics, surgery, and the not-so-fun days when your pet is sick or hurt and needs us quickly.

Mostly, though, we are here to know your pet. The more we see them over the years, the better we get at spotting what is normal for them and catching what is not, early, when it is easier to handle. That is the whole idea behind good preventive care, and the thread running through this guide.

A quick look

01	**Preventive care and wellness**	Vaccine records, parasite prevention, and the routine care that keeps small problems from becoming big ones.
02	**Puppy and dog training**	Step-by-step guides for building good manners and a confident, easy-to-live-with dog.
03	**New pet resources**	How to bring a new pet into the household without the drama, and settle everyone into a routine.
04	**Nutrition and feeding**	How to switch foods without upsetting any stomachs, and keep your pet eating well.
05	**Dental and home care**	The at-home basics. Teeth, ears, and the other things easier to stay ahead of than to fix.

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Canine Vaccination and Prevention Record. Core vaccines, lifestyle vaccines, parasite prevention tracking, wellness notes.

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Obedience Training 101. Basic commands, loose-leash walking, socialization, common mistakes.

Puppy Training Progress Report Card. Obedience tracking, house training milestones, socialization checklist, graduation goals.

03 New pet resources

Introducing a New Pet to Your Household. Dog-to-dog, cat-to-cat, dog-and-cat introductions, reading stress signals.

04 Nutrition and feeding

Switching Your Pet's Food. The 7-day plan, sensitive-stomach guidelines, common questions.

05 Dental and home care

Dental Care. The basics, the brushing training plan, professional cleanings.

Ear Care. Spotting trouble, cleaning and medicating at home, sticking with treatment.

Anal Glands. What they are, signs of trouble, when to call us.

FOR THE LONG HAUL

From the puppy and kitten chaos to the gray-muzzle years.

Anything in here you want to talk through, or anything that has you worried, give us a call. That is what we are here for.

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YOUR DOG'S VACCINE AND PREVENTION RECORD

One page for every shot, every reminder

Bring this along to every visit and we will keep it current together. It is the simplest way to know exactly where your dog stands.

01 The basics

NAME _____ BREED _____

DATE OF BIRTH / AGE _____ OWNER _____

SEX ☐ Male ☐ Female SPAYED / NEUTERED ☐ Yes ☐ No MICROCHIP NUMBER _____

02 Core vaccines

The non-negotiables. These cover the serious, common stuff every dog should be protected against.

VACCINE	DATE GIVEN	NEXT DUE
DA2PP #1		
DA2PP #2		
DA2PP #3		
DA2PP booster		
Leptospirosis #1		
Leptospirosis #2		
Annual leptospirosis booster		
Rabies		
Bordetella		

03 Lifestyle vaccines

These depend on where your dog goes and who they spend time with. Boarding, daycare, dog parks, that crowd.

VACCINE	DATE GIVEN	NEXT DUE
Canine influenza #1		
Canine influenza #2		
Annual influenza booster		

04 Puppy schedule

Got a puppy? Here is the rough roadmap for the first few months. We will keep you on track.

6 TO 8 WEEKS	☐ DA2PP
10 TO 12 WEEKS	☐ DA2PP ☐ Leptospirosis #1
14 TO 16 WEEKS	☐ DA2PP ☐ Leptospirosis #2 ☐ Rabies ☐ Bordetella (if indicated) ☐ Influenza #1 (if indicated)
16 TO 20 WEEKS	☐ Influenza #2 (if indicated)
1 YEAR BOOSTER	☐ DA2PP ☐ Rabies ☐ Leptospirosis ☐ Bordetella ☐ Influenza

05 Testing and labs

Quick yearly checks that catch the hidden stuff early, while it is still easy to deal with.

Heartworm test ANNUAL

DATE	RESULT
	☐ Negative ☐ Positive
	☐ Negative ☐ Positive
	☐ Negative ☐ Positive

Annual labs / bloodwork

DATE DONE	NEXT DUE

06 Monthly prevention

Year-round, every month, no matter where you live. Parasites do not take the winter off.

Heartworm prevention

PRODUCT

☐ Jan ☐ Feb ☐ Mar ☐ Apr ☐ May ☐ Jun
☐ Jul ☐ Aug ☐ Sep ☐ Oct ☐ Nov ☐ Dec

Flea and tick prevention

PRODUCT

☐ Jan ☐ Feb ☐ Mar ☐ Apr ☐ May ☐ Jun
☐ Jul ☐ Aug ☐ Sep ☐ Oct ☐ Nov ☐ Dec

07 Notes

Keep this with your dog's things and bring it to every visit. We will fill it in together and make sure nothing slips.

AFTER THE SHOTS

What to keep an eye on, and when to call us



Good news first. Most pets shrug off their vaccines and go right back to being themselves. If anything does come up, it is almost always mild and clears within a day or two.

01 The normal stuff

None of this is cause for alarm. It usually sorts itself out within 24 to 48 hours.

- A little tired or slower than usual
- Eating a bit less than normal
- A small, temporary bump at the injection site
- A sore spot where the shot went in
- A mild fever (a healthy dog runs 101 to 102.5°F; higher is a fever)

Give them fresh water, a quiet place to rest, and a little grace. They earned it.

02 When to call us right away

These are rare. But if you notice any of them, call us or head to an emergency vet.

- → Swelling in the face, around the eyes, or the muzzle
- → Trouble breathing
- → Severe diarrhea
- → Pale gums
- → Seizures
- → Hives or raised bumps on the skin
- → A lot of vomiting
- → Collapsing or sudden weakness
- → Pain that will not let up, or crying out

Most serious reactions show up within the first few hours, though once in a while they appear over the next day or two. When in doubt, call. We would always rather hear from you.

03 If a mild reaction starts DOGS ONLY

For milder signs like hives or facial swelling, your veterinarian may have you give plain Benadryl (diphenhydramine) while you reach us. Call us first if you can.

READ FIRST **Use plain Benadryl only.** Make sure diphenhydramine is the single active ingredient. Skip anything with added decongestants, pain relievers, or xylitol.

Dogs under 10 lbs

Children's Benadryl liquid (12.5 mg / 5 mL)

0.4 mL per pound

A 6 lb dog gets about 2.4 mL.

Dogs 11 lbs and up

Adult Benadryl (25 mg pink tablet)

1 mg per pound · about 1 tablet / 25 lbs

A 50 lb dog gets two tablets.

For a serious reaction, our doctors recommend both: give Benadryl as directed above, and get your dog evaluated at the nearest emergency veterinary hospital right away. If they are struggling to breathe, collapse, or swell severely, go now.

Cat owners, please call us first. The dosing above is for dogs only.

04 A heads-up for cat owners

Every so often, a cat develops a lump where the shot went in. Most are nothing. Give us a call if a lump:

- Sticks around longer than 3 months
- Gets bigger than about 2 cm (grape-sized, give or take)
- Keeps growing after the first month

IF YOU NEED US

Westover Hills Animal Hospital

(210) 680-5243
Monday to Friday, 7:30 am to 5:30 pm

AFTER HOURS

Thrive Pet Healthcare Specialists
(210) 822-2873

Thanks for trusting us with your pet today. Any worries at all after the visit, we are just a phone call away.

POTTY TRAINING YOUR PUPPY

The early days are messy

New puppy, big adjustment. Potty training takes patience, consistency, and a lot of trips outside. Most puppies are reliably house-trained within a few months.

You have got this.



01 Set a schedule

Puppies run on routine.

TAKE YOUR PUPPY OUT

- [ ] First thing in the morning
- [ ] After meals and big drinks
- [ ] After naps
- [ ] After play
- [ ] Before bed
- [ ] Every 1 to 2 hours when little

HOW LONG CAN THEY HOLD IT?

1 hr / month

Roughly one hour per month of age. A three-month-old, about three hours.

3 mo ≈ 3 hrs | Caps near 8 hrs

02 Pick a potty spot

Head to the same spot every time. The familiar smell is basically a built-in reminder of why they are out there.

03 Reward the wins

The second they go outside, make a big deal of it.

1. Praise right away
2. Treat within a few seconds
3. Use the same phrase every time, like “Go potty”

A treat thirty seconds late just rewards wandering off. Timing is everything.

04 Keep an eye out indoors

Learn your puppy's tells. Most will:

- Sniff around
- Circle
- Whine
- Head for the door
- Stop playing all of a sudden

Spot any of these and get them out, quick.

05 Prevent accidents

1. Crate when you cannot supervise. Done right, it is a cozy den, not a punishment.
2. Keep them leashed or in sight. Accidents happen in the ten seconds you look away.
3. Clean up any indoor accidents right away with an enzymatic cleaner. It removes the smell your puppy would otherwise follow back to the same spot.

06 What not to do

Skip the nose-rub
They will not connect the dots. They just learn to be nervous around you.

No yelling
Punishment and stress only slow the whole thing down.

No rush
Do not expect overnight perfection. There is no such thing.

07 When to call us

Sometimes accidents are a health thing, not a training thing. **Give us a call if your puppy:**

- → Keeps having accidents despite solid training
- → Strains to urinate
- → Has diarrhea
- → Suddenly loses skills they already had

THE WHOLE GAME

Consistency and patience. That is it.

Questions about training, accidents, or anything else, any time? Give us a call. We are glad to help.

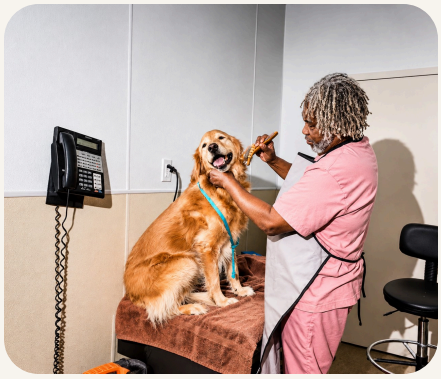
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OBEDIENCE TRAINING 101

The basics, minus the drill-sergeant energy

Training is one of the best things you can do for your dog. It teaches manners, keeps them safe, and just makes life together easier. Keep it positive, consistent, and short.

Dogs were not built for lectures.



01 The keys to getting it right

Keep it short

Dogs learn best in quick bursts. A long session just loses them.

- 5 to 10 minutes at a time
- 2 to 3 times a day
- Always end on a win

Reward the good

Treats, praise, a favorite toy, a quick game, whatever lights your dog up. **Skip punishment and negative reinforcement entirely.** They mostly teach fear and confusion, and a nervous dog learns slower, not faster.

Stay consistent

Everyone in the house should use the same words. “Sit” always means sit. Pick one word per command and stick to it, or your dog spends the whole time translating.

02 Commands every dog should know

Each one is a quick recipe.

Sit

1. Hold a treat right at their nose.
2. Slowly raise it up and back over their head.
3. As their nose follows, their bottom drops.
4. The moment they sit, say “Sit” and reward.

Down

1. Start from a sit.
2. Hold a treat at their nose, lower it slowly to the floor.
3. Slide it out along the ground.
4. When they lie down, say “Down” and reward.

Stay

1. Ask for a sit.
2. Open palm out, say “Stay.”
3. Take one step back.
4. If they hold, reward.
5. Build up distance and time slowly.

Leave it *the questionable sidewalk find*

1. Hold a treat in a closed fist.
2. Let them sniff and paw at it.
3. The second they give up, say “Leave It.”
4. Reward from your other hand, a different treat.

Come

ESSENTIAL · CAN SAVE A LIFE

Worth the biggest reward you have.

1. Say their name, then "Come."
2. Use a happy, excited voice.
3. Reward big when they reach you.

Never punish a dog for coming to you, even if they took their sweet time getting there.

03 Loose-leash walking

Pulling is the classic struggle. The fix is simple, but takes patience.

1. Reward your dog for walking beside you.
2. Stop moving the moment they pull.
3. Start again when the leash goes slack.
4. Repeat, repeat, repeat.

If pulling gets them nowhere, the pulling stops.

04 Common mistakes

Easy traps to fall into:

- × Repeating a command over and over
- × Training while you are frustrated
- × Expecting perfection right away
- × Reaching for punishment instead of rewards
- × Different rules from different people

05 Socialization matters

A well-socialized dog is a confident dog. Introduce them gently and positively to new things, and keep every new experience a good one. Go at their pace.

New people · New places · New sounds · Friendly, vaccinated dogs

06 When to get a pro involved

Some things are worth an expert's eyes. Reach out to a trainer, or give us a call, if your dog shows any of these. No shame in it. The earlier you get ahead of them, the easier they are to work through.

- → Aggression
- → Resource guarding
- → Sudden changes in behavior
- → Intense fear or anxiety
- → Real trouble with the basics

REMEMBER

Patience, repetition, rewards. That is the whole recipe.

Training never really ends, and that is fine. Questions about training, behavior, or socialization? Give us a call. We are glad to help.

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PUPPY REPORT CARD

From adorable chaos to certified good dog



Think of this less as a test and more as a map. Every box is a small win on the road from tiny tornado to dog you can take anywhere. Check things off as your puppy gets them, go at their pace, and do not worry about the order. Some pups nail recall and battle the crate, others do the reverse. It all evens out.

PUPPY'S NAME _____

OWNER _____

STARTED TRAINING _____

01 Basic obedience

Check each one off as they get it.

- ☐ Sit
- ☐ Stay (10 seconds)
- ☐ Come when called
- ☐ Drop it
- ☐ Loose-leash walking
- ☐ Down
- ☐ Stay (30 seconds)
- ☐ Leave it
- ☐ Wait at doorways
- ☐ Polite greetings (no jumping)

02 House training

- ☐ Uses the designated potty area
- ☐ Signals when they need to go out
- ☐ Accident-free for 1 week
- ☐ Accident-free for 1 month
- ☐ Sleeps through the night, no accidents

03 Crate training

- ☐ Comfortable going into the crate
- ☐ Rests quietly in the crate
- ☐ Sleeps overnight in the crate
- ☐ Stays calm when left alone

Building the cozy den.

04 Socialization

Every new thing your puppy meets and decides is no big deal. Positive experiences with:

- ☐ Men
- ☐ Children
- ☐ People wearing hats
- ☐ People using wheelchairs or walkers
- ☐ Cats
- ☐ Vet visits
- ☐ Busy public places
- ☐ Household noises (vacuum, dishwasher, doorbell)
- ☐ Women
- ☐ Seniors
- ☐ People with umbrellas
- ☐ Other friendly dogs
- ☐ Car rides
- ☐ Grooming appointments
- ☐ Different surfaces (grass, tile, gravel)

05 Handling

What makes future vet and grooming visits a breeze. Cool with:

- ☐ Ear handling
- ☐ Nail trims
- ☐ Brushing and combing
- ☐ Paw handling
- ☐ Tooth brushing
- ☐ Gentle restraint

06 Good manners

The finishing touches.

- ☐ Waits patiently for meals
- ☐ Does not guard food or toys
- ☐ Settles calmly at home
- ☐ Does not mouth or nip too much
- ☐ Greets visitors politely
- ☐ Responds to their name every time

07 Graduation milestones

The frame-worthy stuff.

- ☐ Potty trained
- ☐ Reliable recall (come)
- ☐ Comfortable around new people
- ☐ Completed basic obedience
- ☐ Crate trained
- ☐ Walks nicely on leash
- ☐ Comfortable around other pets
- ☐ Ready for advanced training

Notes from the family

Veterinary team comments

Every box here is one more step toward a confident, happy dog. Keep it up. You are both doing great.

BRINGING HOME A NEW PET

A few ways to help everyone get along

Bringing home a new pet is one of the best days. It is also a big adjustment for the animals already living there, so take the introductions slow. Go at their pace and everyone settles in happily. Rush it and you will be refereeing for weeks.

Patience really is the whole trick.



New here. Be cool.

01 Before they arrive

Give everyone their own setup to start with. Sharing can come later, if it comes at all.

- Separate food and water bowls
- Separate beds
- Separate toys

02 The first few days

Give your new pet a room or quiet corner that is all theirs. A new home is a lot to take in, and having a safe spot to retreat to helps them relax and settle in faster.

03 Making introductions

Take these at the pace of whoever is most nervous. There is no prize for rushing.

Dog → Dog

Usually the quickest to warm up.

- Meet on neutral ground, not at home
- Keep both on leashes
- Keep it short and easy
- Wrap up while it is still going well

Cat → Cat

They like to take it slow, so let them.

- Start them in separate rooms
- Swap bedding and rooms so they learn each other's scent first
- Let them see each other through a cracked door or gate
- Build up to supervised time together, slowly

Dog → Cat

All about the cat feeling safe.

- Keep the dog leashed at first
- Give the cat high places to escape to
- Reward calm behavior from both

04 When to slow down

Noticing any of these? Ease off and give it more time.

- Growling
- Hissing
- Hiding more than usual
- A stiff, frozen body
- Guarding food, toys, or space

None of this means it will not work out. It usually just means you moved a little faster than they were ready for. No harm done. Back up a step and try again.

05 Give it time

Some pets are friends by dinner. Others take weeks or even months. Both are completely normal. Do not force it, and try not to compare yourself to the cuddling videos online. Those took time too. Most pets get there in the end, just on their own schedule.

IF SOMETHING FEELS OFF

Not sure? Give us a call.

We have seen plenty of these work out, and we are always happy to help yours along.

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SWITCHING YOUR PET'S FOOD

Go slow and their stomach will thank you

Whether your vet suggested a new diet or you just found something you like better, the trick is the same. Take it slow. A gradual switch gives your pet's stomach time to adjust and saves you both a messy week.

THE SHORT VERSION

7 days, not 7 minutes

Mix a little more new food in each day until the old food is gone.

01 Why ease into it

Swapping food overnight is a classic way to end up with a rough few days. A slow change lets their digestive system catch up to the new ingredients instead of being ambushed by them.

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Gas
- A pickier eater
- Tummy grumpiness

02 The 7-day plan

Mix the new food in with the old, shifting the ratio a little more each day.



Keep measuring portions so the total stays right. "A little extra" adds up fast.

03 Sensitive stomachs need extra time

Stretch it to 10 to 14 days if your pet has:

- A history of stomach trouble
- Food sensitivities
- A chronic GI condition
- A recent illness

THE SLOWER RAMP

DAYS	OLD / NEW
Days 1 to 3	90% / 10%
Days 4 to 6	75% / 25%
Days 7 to 9	50% / 50%
Days 10 to 12	25% / 75%
Days 13 to 14	100% new

04 A few things that help

Stick to a schedule. Meals at the same times keep things predictable.

Pause treats for now. Feed only the old and new food. If their stomach acts up, you will know it is the food.

Measure every time. A cup beats eyeballing it and prevents overfeeding.

Keep water topped up. Fresh and clean, always.

05 What's normal

Most pets make the switch without any drama. A little change in their stool the first few days is par for the course. They should keep eating normally, stay their usual energetic self, and have only minor digestive changes, if any.

06 When to call us

Give us a call if your pet has:

- → Repeated vomiting
- → Blood in the stool
- → Low energy
- → Severe diarrhea
- → No interest in eating
- → A lot of gas or discomfort

SECTION 07

A note on prescription diets

If your vet put your pet on a therapeutic diet, stick to it closely. Even small amounts of table food, treats, or other pet food can undercut how well it works. When in doubt, ask us before adding anything.

08 Common questions

My pet only wants the old food.
Slow the transition down and skip the toppings and treats, which encourage picky holdouts.

Can I switch overnight?
Better not to, unless your vet specifically tells you to.

Diarrhea mid-switch?
Back up to the last ratio that sat well, then move more slowly. If it sticks around, call us.

STILL DECIDING

Every pet is a little different. We will help you land on the right one.

Questions about your pet's food or feeding plan? Give us a call. We are glad to help.

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Westover Hills
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OWNER'S GUIDE
KEEP THIS HANDY

HOME CARE GUIDES

The stuff that comes up at home

Keeping teeth clean, dealing with ear trouble, and the great mystery of scooting. How to stay on top of each one, and when to let us take it from there.

01	**Dental care**	Brushing, buildup, and cleanings.
02	**Ear care**	Spotting and cleaning ear trouble.
03	**Anal glands**	The scooting situation, explained.

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01 Dental care

By age three, most dogs and cats have some periodontal disease. It is the most common problem we see, and usually the reason behind bad breath. The good news: it is largely preventable at home.

Plaque soft, wipes away → **Tartar** hardened, stuck on → **Infected gums** loose teeth, pain

Brushing at home

Daily brushing is the single best thing you can do. Build up to it slowly over a few weeks so your pet decides it is no big deal. Starting young (8 to 12 weeks) is ideal, but it is never too late. You will need a soft pet toothbrush, finger brush, or clean washcloth, plus pet toothpaste.

WEEK 1

Get them used to it

Lift the lips, run a finger along teeth and gums. 30 seconds building to a couple of minutes. Treat every time.

WEEK 2

Add a brush, no paste

Damp washcloth or wet brush. Gently rub the outer surfaces back and forth. 30 seconds up to a few minutes.

WEEK 3

Add toothpaste

A pea-sized amount, brushing outer surfaces top and bottom. Aim for a calm, quick daily routine.

A few pointers

- Do not rush it. Pushing too fast creates a pet who hates the whole thing.
- End every session with a treat. Make it the best part of their day.
- Dental chews help, but they are a bonus, not a replacement for brushing.
- If your pet growls, snaps, or really fights it, stop and call us. We will find another way.

NEVER

Never use human toothpaste. It can upset their stomach, and some ingredients are toxic to pets.

Professional cleanings

Even with great home care, most pets need a professional cleaning now and then. We do it under anesthesia to scale off hardened tartar below the gumline and polish, just like your own dental visit. Good home care stretches out the time between them.

Ask us which toothpaste, chews, and diets are actually worth your money.

02 Ear care

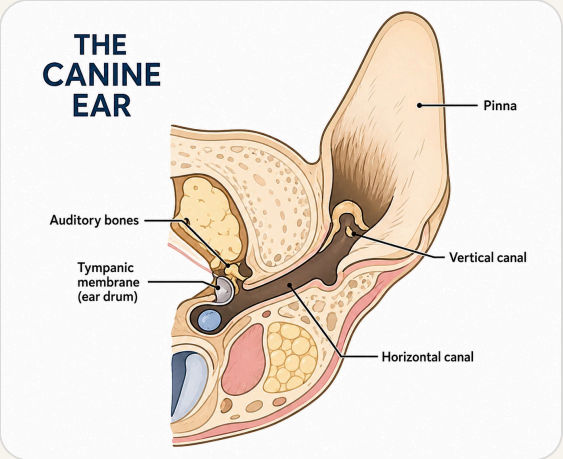
Some pets, especially dogs with floppy ears or allergies, are prone to ear infections. Here is how to spot trouble, clean properly at home, and know when it needs us.

Signs of an ear problem

- Shaking the head, or tilting to one side
- Scratching or pawing at the ears
- Discharge, or a smell from the ear
- Redness or swelling
- Flinching when you touch the ear

What causes it

Yeast or bacteria, ear mites, allergies, a foreign object like a grass seed, or simply the shape of your pet's ears. Catching it early matters. Left to spread deeper, it gets more painful and harder to treat.



The canine ear, cross-section. Note the L-shaped canal.

Cleaning and medicating at home

If we sent you home with a cleaner and medication, here is the routine. Do it somewhere easy to wipe down, like a tiled bathroom or outside.

1 Fill it
Fill the canal generously with cleaner. Really fill it, not just a few drops.

2 Massage
Massage the base 30 to 60 seconds. A squishing or squelching sound means the cleaner is reaching down into the canal and doing its job.

3 Wipe
Let them shake, then wipe loosened debris with a cotton ball.

4 Medicate
Apply the prescribed ointment or drops into the canal.

5 Work it in
Massage the base again to work the medication in.

6 Repeat
Repeat as directed, and bring them back for the recheck.

ONE IMPORTANT RULE

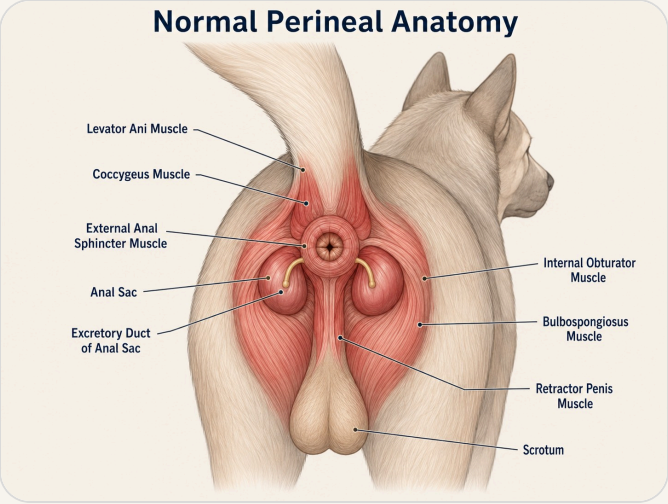
Cotton balls, never cotton swabs. Swabs push debris deeper and can damage the eardrum. Stick to the outer parts you can see.

Stick with it

Finish the full course even once ears look better, and keep every recheck. Infections love to return, and the next one is not always the same type.

03 Anal glands

The scooting situation, explained. Two small scent glands just inside your pet's rear. Normally they empty on their own. When they do not, they get full, uncomfortable, and your pet goes looking for relief.



Normal perineal anatomy. The anal sacs sit just inside the rear.

Signs to watch for

The classic one is scooting, dragging the rear along the floor. You might also catch them licking the area, or a dog chasing their tail. Cats tend to over-groom right under the tail.

Why it is worth watching

A gland that stays full can become impacted, then infected, and can abscess and rupture through the skin. Painful, messy, and easily mistaken for bleeding. Much better to head it off early.

How often do they need emptying?

Very individual. Some pets never need help, others need it regularly. The simplest rule is to let your pet tell you. When the scooting starts back up, it is time to come in.

Let the scooting be your calendar.

If it is a recurring thing

- A higher-fiber diet makes bulkier stool that can press the glands empty naturally. Ask us.
- You can learn to express them at home, or hand the job off. No judgment either way.
- In rare cases, surgical removal is an option. A specialist procedure we would talk through carefully first.

WHEN THE SCOOTING WILL NOT QUIT

If the glands are empty and they are still scooting, something else is going on.

Itchy skin, tapeworms, even lower back pain can look like a gland problem. (And the old story about worms causing scooting is mostly a myth.) Bring them in and we will track down the real cause.

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