



A Pain near the Butt: Stud Tail in Dogs

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Your dog looks great from head to toe...that is, until you get to his tail, where you see a patch of worn fur, raised skin, or discoloration. Your four-legged friend may have a condition known as stud tail. But don't worry – chances are it can be treated rather easily.

What is Stud Tail?

Stud tail is a basic term used to describe a condition known as [tail gland hyperplasia](#) or the fancier, more scientific name of supracaudal gland hyperplasia or supracaudal gland infection. Even though its common name seems to imply it being a male-only condition, the issue can also inflict female dogs.

As the scientific designation implies, supracaudal gland infection is caused by an infection of the supracaudal gland. Also, known as [the violet gland](#), this gland is important to a dog because it plays a vital role in the mating process for both males and females.

The violet gland's main purpose is to secrete substances that create scents and signals to attract other dogs. It is known as the violet gland because the chemicals that are used to create this odor are like the chemicals used by violets to produce their distinctive smell. Of course, the odor is not fragrant like a violet when it's produced by a pooch.

This gland is typically found on the upper half of the tail, around the 9th caudal vertebra. However, the placement on the tail does depend on the breed. If a dog has a short, stubby tail, this gland may not be present in the tail at all.

How Does the Infection that Causes Stud Tail Happen?

There are two main causes to stud tail. The first cause is due to a dog's androgen levels are high over an extended period of time. This makes sense in a way; after all, the violet gland is essentially working overtime during this period to attract other dogs for the mating process.

The other cause to stud tail is because of agitation due to an outside agitator, such as fleas. The little critters love to hang out on certain areas of a dog, and the backside of a pooch is prime real estate. If they start sourcing blood around where the violet gland is located, the gland could start to swell.

This latter reason for stud tail is why it is possible for a spayed or neutered dog to develop the condition. In the case of these types of pooches, the condition could be viewed as [flea-allergy dermatitis](#). Indeed, the symptomatic links that are seen in flea-allergy dermatitis and stud tail are connected rather strongly.

What to Look for with Stud Tail



Essentially, if your dog has stud tail, you will see symptoms that look like a few other skin-related ailments, particularly those pertaining to negative reactions to flea bites. Some of these signs include bald patches on the tail or red, irritated skin on or around the affected area. You'll also notice certain physical behaviors, like an increase in tail-biting.

One trait that differentiates stud tail from other similar-looking elements is the expansion of the violet gland. The part of the tail housing the gland will swell up and create a bulge of varying size. This may be easier to spot if your dog has already worn the fur off around the bulge.

How Is Stud Tail Treated?

The first thing you need to do if you suspect your dog has stud tail is to determine if you have a flea-related issue on your hands. If it is obvious that one of those infamous wingless pests has wreaked havoc on your pooch's backside, you can treat the condition as you would a typical case of flea-allergy dermatitis.

There are scores of topical creams, sprays, dips, and oral medications that you can deploy to help your pooch combat this problem. Many of these solutions are sold over the counter while others are available by a prescription. That said, if you aren't 100% sure that fleas are the cause of the issue, take your pooch to the vet for a more thorough examination

If it is determined that fleas are not the cause of stud tail, you'll see that some of the treatment options still look like flea treatments, such as the use of special [shampoos](#). Other, more intensified treatments may be recommended, such as antibiotic therapy or steroidal treatments.

In some rare cases, more serious solutions may be deployed to combat stud tail. For instance, surgery may be required to reduce the size of the gland if its bulging is excessive. Sometimes, it may be recommended that the gland may be removed altogether.

Sometimes, if a male dog is suffering from the condition, castration or neutering may be recommended. This is due to the condition's connection with androgen levels, which fluctuate to high levels during the mating process. While this recommendation is typically not an issue, it could be problematic if you had plans of breeding your pooch.

Despite these worst-case scenarios – and they are worst-case scenarios – it is generally thought that the prognosis for stud tail is awfully good. Your pooch won't experience an abundance of issues beyond the realm of discomfort and fur loss while in the throes of the condition. Once it's resolved, he should bounce back to normal.

Don't Ignore It – Take Care of It!

Even though stud tail is a relatively minor issue compared to other ailments that may affect your pooch, you shouldn't ignore it, either. Remember, it will cause your doggie some level of discomfort as his threadbare tail may indicate. That sign alone should spur you to action.

When you do get it checked out, don't panic – do so with confidence! Again, stud tail is a relatively mild condition that is easily treatable, and your dog will usually have no problem recovering from the ordeal once the treatment has run its course. Besides, your dog will be most appreciative of your willingness to take care of them, and that should be enough.