

ABSCESSES IN DOGS

Understanding Painful Skin Infections & Recovery

An abscess is a painful pocket of infection beneath the skin that commonly develops after bite wounds, punctures, grass seeds, or other injuries. Early veterinary treatment helps relieve pain, prevent complications, and speed healing.

Prompt treatment can make a big difference.

ABSCESSES
ARE PAINFUL
INFECTIONS THAT
CAN WORSEN
QUICKLY WITHOUT
TREATMENT.



1 WHAT IS AN ABSCESS?

An abscess is a collection of:

- 🐾 Pus
- 🐾 Bacteria
- 🐾 Inflammatory cells
- 🐾 Damaged tissue

that becomes trapped beneath the skin.



DID YOU KNOW?

- 🐾 A small puncture wound on the surface may hide a much larger infection underneath.
- 🐾 Many abscesses rupture several days after the initial injury.
- 🐾 Grass seeds are a common cause of abscesses in Australian dogs.



2 COMMON CAUSES

Abscesses may develop from:

- 1 Dog bites
- 2 Grass seed migration
- 3 Stick injuries
- 4 Puncture wounds
- 5 Surgical wound infections
- 6 Foreign bodies under the skin
- 7 Dental disease (tooth root abscesses)
- 8 Anal gland infections



3 SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

Look for:

- ✓ Swelling or lump
- ✓ Pain when touched
- ✓ Redness or heat
- ✓ Pus or discharge
- ✓ Bad smell
- ✓ Fever
- ✓ Reduced appetite
- ✓ Lethargy
- ✓ Limping



Some abscesses burst and drain, before owners realise an infection is present.

4 WHICH DOGS ARE MOST AT RISK?

High-risk dogs include:

- ✓ Outdoor dogs
- ✓ Hunting dogs
- ✓ Working dogs
- ✓ Dogs frequently interacting with other dogs
- ✓ Dogs exposed to grass seeds
- ✓ Dogs with skin disease



However, any dog can develop an abscess.

5 HOW IS IT DIAGNOSED?

Your veterinarian may:

- 🐾 Examine the swelling
- ✓ Assess pain and inflammation
- ✓ Clip and inspect the area
- ✓ Collect samples of discharge
- ✓ Perform bacterial culture if required
- ✓ Take radiographs or ultrasound if a foreign body is suspected



Accurate diagnosis helps guide treatment.

6 TREATMENT OPTIONS

Treatment may include:

- 🐾 Draining the abscess
- 🐾 Flushing infected tissue
- 🐾 Removal of foreign material
- 🐾 Antibiotics
- 🐾 Anti-inflammatory medication
- 🐾 Pain relief
- 🐾 Surgical treatment if required
- 🐾 Follow-up examinations



Many abscesses require sedation or anaesthesia for proper treatment.

7 HOME CARE & RECOVERY

To support healing:

- 🐾 Administer medications as prescribed
- 🐾 Keep the area clean
- 🐾 Prevent licking or chewing
- 🐾 Use an Elizabethan collar if advised
- 🐾 Attend recheck appointments
- ✓ Monitor for swelling or discharge



Most dogs improve rapidly once the infection is drained and treated.

8 PREVENTION TIPS

- 🐾 Check your dog regularly for wounds
- 🐾 Inspect for grass seeds after walks
- 🐾 Look between toe fur and pads carefully
- 🐾 Keep skin infections under control
- 🐾 Maintain routine veterinary check-ups
- 🐾 Monitor hunting and working dogs closely

Prevention and early intervention are the best protection.



9 ADDITIONAL TIPS

- ★ Bite wounds commonly lead to abscesses
- ★ Grass seeds can migrate beneath the skin
- ★ Never squeeze or lance abscesses
- ★ Early treatment reduces pain and speeds recovery

10 EVERY DOG COUNTS

If your dog develops a painful swelling, discharge, fever, or suddenly seems unwell, arrange a veterinary examination promptly.
Early diagnosis and treatment can prevent serious illness and give your dog a quicker recovery.



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