



ABSCESS

An abscess is the formation of an accumulation of infectious material containing a thick, yellow fluid. The surrounding area is often very swollen and painful. An abscess that has fully formed feels like a “water-filled balloon” when touched. It may feel hot, swollen, and can be painful.

Abscesses are caused by bacterial contamination of a puncture wound, such as a scratch or bite wound. The skin over this type wound heals quickly on the outside which encloses the bacteria pushed in by the puncture. Since the bacteria can't get out, an infection begins to form.

If an abscess is not surgically drained, the bacterial infection can spread in the surrounding tissues and eventually all over the body through the blood stream. Blood poisoning may occur and can threaten the pet's life.

Signs of blood poisoning from an abscess include depression, dehydration, fever and vomiting.

Treatment involves drainage of the infection. Sedation is usually required. The wound must then be kept open so that it will heal from the inside out. Scabs must be removed daily to insure that proper drainage continues to occur. We recommend warm compressing abscesses twice daily for about five minutes and systemic antibiotics to kill the source of infection.

Prevention of abscess formation includes prompt examination of possible puncture wounds and use of appropriate antibiotic therapy. Male dogs and cats should be neutered to help prevent fighting.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS:

- o Keep the affected area clean and apply a warm compress to the area for at least 5 minutes twice a day.
- o Flush wound with small amount of antiseptic solution 3-4 times each day if directed by veterinarian. If a drainage tube has been inserted, flush beside the tube, not through the tube. Remove the drain when instructed by your pet's veterinarian.
- o Give oral antibiotics as directed.
- o Schedule a recheck appointment.
- o Encourage Oral Fluids.
- o Notify us if your pet refuses to eat or drink within 24 hours after leaving the clinic.