

# Does Your Cat Show This Problematic Dog-Like Conduct?

Definitely not normal for cats and is a telltale sign of a problem - most likely one of these 4 things. One of them is a situation that could affect your own health, too. Here's the very first thing I'd do if it were my kitty. Even then, you'll probably need to enlist the help of your vet.

**Analysis by Dr. Karen Shaw Becker**

## STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- Scooting (butt dragging) is more often seen in dogs than cats, but some kitties also engage in this slightly unnerving behavior
- Since butt dragging isn't normal, if your cat scoots regularly or for a reason other than to remove litter stuck to his backside, you should investigate the cause with the help of your veterinarian, if necessary
- Causes of scooting in kitties can include itchy, irritated skin; external or GI parasites; environmental or food allergies; and anal gland issues

***Editor's Note: This article is a reprint. It was originally published September 05, 2017.***

Scooting, which is a polite way of describing the behavior of a pet who's dragging his furry backside across the floor, is typically associated with dogs rather than cats. And while scooting is indeed much more common in dogs, occasionally a kitty will also scoot.

As with dogs, there can be several causes for Fluffy's butt dragging, and it's important to figure out what's going on. A one-time scoot is probably nothing to worry about, but if you notice she's doing it fairly regularly, it's a good idea to make an appointment with your veterinarian.

Generally speaking, your cat is feeling some sort of discomfort or irritation back there that's causing her to scoot. Some cats, long-haired kitties in particular, will sometimes scoot after leaving the litterbox to rid themselves of a bit of poop or litter stuck to their fur. It could also be your cat has a skin condition that's itchy or painful, or she might have parasites, allergies or a problem with her anal glands.

## 4 Common Reasons for Scooting in Cats

1. **Pruritus** — Pruritus is a fancy word for itchy skin, and along with scooting, you may also notice kitty excessively grooming his backside in an effort to relieve the itch. Intense licking, chewing and butt dragging can inflame the skin and lead to hair loss.

There's almost always an underlying reason for an animal's itchy backside, including gastrointestinal (GI) or external parasites (e.g., fleas or mites), allergies, bacterial and yeast infections, neoplasia (abnormal cell development) and immune disorders. Diagnosis of pruritus with no identified cause requires a skin biopsy,

and treatment depends on the cause. I recommend holding off on a biopsy until other common causes have been ruled out and non-toxic treatments have been exhausted.

2. **GI Parasites** — Intestinal parasites are repulsive little creatures that take up residence inside your cat's GI tract (and in some cases they're zoonoses, meaning you can get them as well), and cause all sorts of digestive and other issues.

Common invaders include giardia, coccidium, cryptosporidium and worms (whipworms, tapeworms and hookworms). It's very important that your veterinarian identifies the precise type of worm. I recommend avoiding combination treatments that claim to kill and/or prevent a variety of worms and other internal parasites.

More is not better when it comes to drugs for your pet. If your cat has whipworms, for example, treat those worms specifically, and only long enough to clear the infection. Some integrative veterinarians offer natural dewormers for certain kinds of intestinal worm infestations. I have tried them all and unfortunately, sometimes they work, and sometimes they don't.

For instance, food-grade diatomaceous earth kills tapeworm segments, but not the deeply embedded head, so you may think you've killed the entire worm, only to find out later that your pet is chronically infected, which can lead to chronic GI inflammation and dysbiosis.

It's fine to try natural deworming first, but making sure these resilient parasites are truly eliminated, regardless of what you use, is of utmost importance to avoid chronic, avoidable GI problems and symptoms such as scooting.

3. **Allergies** — It's possible kitty's sensitive to something in her environment that's causing her to scoot. Examples include dust mites, fleas, molds, grasses or other pollens she's exposed to outdoors or that make their way inside on shoes, clothes or dog fur.

Depending on what you feed your cat, there's also a chance she's developed an allergy to something in her diet. The grains in commercial pet food are allergenic and inflammatory. If your cat is dragging her butt around the house, the first thing you should do is eliminate all grains from her diet. Stop feeding any food that contains corn, potato, oatmeal, wheat, rice or soy.

I also recommend switching to a novel protein. If, for example, kitty's been eating only fish, make a transition to chicken or beef. A constant diet of just one or two types of protein can trigger an allergic inflammatory response.

Feeding a balanced, species-appropriate diet will address food sensitivities and poor stool consistency, both of which can lead to scooting. Adding probiotics, a bit of fiber (finely ground pumpkin seeds or slippery elm powder) and digestive enzymes to her diet can also be beneficial.

4. **Anal Gland Issues** — Just like dogs, kitties have anal glands or sacs that sit just inside the rectum, one on either side of the anus at about 8:00 and 4:00 o'clock. The glands secrete a very smelly, oily substance thought to be a territorial marker.

These little organs are part of nature's design, and a bowel movement of normal consistency should be sufficient to empty the contents of the sacs. However, in domesticated cats, there can be interference caused by stool that is too loose and doesn't press against the glands during evacuation. This action is necessary to

trigger expression of the contents of the sacs.

Overweight kitties can have anal gland problems due to insufficient muscle tone and too much fatty tissue. Certain skin disorders and infections can also affect sac emptying. If trapped secretions accumulate and thicken in the anal glands, it can lead to impaction.

The most common cause of anal gland problems is the food you feed your cat. Since the anal sacs are at the very end of the digestive tract, anything that irritates or causes inflammation of the GI tract can do the same to the anal glands.

As I explained above, the first thing you should do is eliminate all grains from the diet, including any food that contains corn, potato, oatmeal, wheat, rice or soy. I also recommend switching to a novel protein. You'll also need to address stool inconsistencies. If kitty's stool is frequently soft or watery, his anal sacs may not be getting the firm pressure they need to empty properly. Feeding your cat a species-appropriate diet will address both food allergies and poor stool consistency.

Many health concerns, including anal gland problems and scooting, disappear once a pet is eating the type and quality of food nature intended him to eat.

## **Sources and References**

[PetMD](#)

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