

NEUTERING YOUR PET



Neutering is recommended to prevent unexpected and unwanted litters as well as reducing the risk of certain health problems for your pet as they get older. It can also help to reduce behaviours linked to hormonal influences. Deciding whether this is appropriate for your pet and the best time for surgery should be discussed with our vets.

Benefits

There are a number of benefits to neutering:

- Reduction in roaming and straying which may result in injury or accident
- Reduction in testosterone related behaviours in males such as aggression and urine marking
- Removal of seasons in female dogs which have hygiene implications as well as exercise restrictions due to the unwanted attention of male dogs
- Prevention of unwanted pregnancy
- Prevention of false pregnancy in female dogs which may be distressing for both pet and owner
- Avoidance of potentially life threatening pyometra and other uterine diseases
- Prevention and reduction of certain types of cancer, such as mammary and testicular tumours

Potential disadvantages

Neutered animals are more prone to gaining weight although this can be avoided by regular exercise and reducing the amount they are fed or using a good quality diet specifically for neutered pets. The likelihood of urinary incontinence in females is slightly increased but weight control reduces the risk and symptoms can be controlled with medication. It is important to remember that males can remain fertile for up to 6 weeks after the operation!

Timing

- **Female Dogs** - Their first season can be as early as 5 months of age and last for 3 weeks. Surgery during this time is high risk due to an increased blood supply to the uterus. Therefore, the best time to spay is usually three months after a season has finished, this also means that hormone levels are balanced.
- **Female Cats** - They can be spayed when they reach 6 months old. Occasionally, we are able to neuter them earlier, especially if they have reached sexual maturity or where they are at risk of pregnancy. Female cats come into season frequently and are ready to mate again only 3 weeks after giving birth so the risk of unwanted pregnancy is high.
- **Male Dogs** - Castration can be performed at 6 months or older, although in some cases it may be sensible to delay surgery until your dog is older. Early castration is recommended if unwanted behaviours such as excessive mounting or urine marking occur and if an entire bitch lives in the household. Dogs should always be castrated if their testicles have not fully descended by 6 months of age, as undescended testicles are more prone to cancer.
- **Male Cats** - Neutering can be performed at 5 months old for male cats but can be earlier depending on the individual cat and situation. Similar to dogs, they should always be castrated if their testicles have not fully descended, as they are more prone to cancer.



Preparation

It is important that your pet does not have anything to eat after 10pm the evening prior to the operation and access to water is removed that morning. They need to have an empty stomach for their safety so that there is a reduced risk associated complications while under anaesthesia.

Keep your cat in overnight before the operation, so that you can ensure that they don't have access to any food and it is easier for you to bring them to their appointment.

On the Day

Allow sufficient time in the morning to ensure that you arrive in good time for your admission appointment. Dogs should be taken for a short walk for toileting purposes and cats and should be brought in safe and secure carriers.

An admission appointment will be required where we will discuss the procedure and check your pet is fit and healthy to undergo a general anaesthetic. You will be asked to sign a consent form - it is important you check all the details are correct, especially the contact number for the day. We will then discuss the best time to call us for an update and to book an appointment for collection. They will then be given time to settle in before the operation.

The Procedure

Your pet will be given an injection of pain relief and a mild sedative to help them relax. Once anaesthetised, an area of hair will be clipped over the surgical site and the skin prepared for sterile surgery. There may be an additional clipped patches of fur on their leg where we have needed to place a line for fluids.

In females, the ovaries and uterus are removed while in males both testicles are removed. Following surgery, they are given time to recover with us and most pets are able to go home the same afternoon.

Post-Operative Care

Once home, they must be rested to allow healing. This means short lead walks for 10 days for dogs and cats must be kept indoors for a couple of days. It is important to stop them licking the wound as this can cause irritation and infection, we recommend using a buster collar or similar alternative to prevent this. We also advise a light bland diet for the first meal following surgery and post-operative checks will be required to ensure everything is healing well.

Summary

When your pet is not intended to be bred from we fully support neutering as part of responsible pet ownership and for your pet's health. We hope that you are now able to make an informed decision regarding neutering your pet. For any further advice please contact us for more information and we will be happy to help.

