

But doesn't castration make dogs fat?

Dogs can be more prone to gaining weight after castration, but only if overfed. It is important to appreciate that after the surgery your dog may require less food than when he was entire. Feeding a suitable amount of a good quality diet and giving regular exercise will prevent obesity.



Will it change my dog's personality?

Personality changes after castration are unusual, although castration will usually help to improve undesirable male behaviours. If you are concerned that your dog may suffer adversely from castration then please discuss this with your vet.

If you are unsure about whether castration is suitable it might be appropriate to use a hormone implant that reliably suppresses testosterone levels for up to six months. This can allow you to assess the effects of castration on a temporary basis before making the final decision. Please discuss this with your vet.

Summary

- Castration has a huge number of benefits and we fully support it as a responsible part of pet ownership.
- We hope that you are now better able to make an informed decision regarding your dog. For any further advice please contact your vet for more information.



XLVets Small Animal member veterinary practices work together to share experience, knowledge and ideas to ensure the highest levels of quality and care for their client's pets. XLVet member practices provide a compassionate and caring service for all pets and at the same time offer comprehensive and up-to-date treatment in all fields of veterinary medicine and surgery.

NEUTERING YOUR DOG – MALE CASTRATION



Castration is a common surgical procedure performed on male dogs. The decision whether or not to castrate should be taken after discussion with your vet. This leaflet will give you more information and may help you decide what questions you should ask about the procedure.

What is castration and why is it performed?

Castration is removal of the testicles from the scrotum. Soon afterwards, levels of the hormone testosterone will fall significantly, which may allow improvement of certain undesirable behaviours. Sperm will also no longer be produced, so your dog will not be able to father any unwanted litters, but be careful as dogs can remain fertile for up to 6 weeks after the operation!

Benefits of Castration

There are several benefits of castration, which include:

1. Behavioural management – entire male dogs can develop undesirable behaviours associated with their testosterone, including:
 - urine marking
 - straying after bitches
 - aggression.
2. Prevention of testicular cancer – a common cancer of older male dogs.
3. Prevention of some diseases of the prostate gland.
4. Prevention of some tumours of the anus.
5. Prevention of certain hernias.



When should a dog be castrated?

Castration can be performed from six months of age onwards; however in some cases it may be sensible to consider delaying surgery until your dog is older. Timing of castration will depend on individual circumstances.

Early castration is generally recommended if unwanted behaviours such as excessive mounting behaviour or urine marking occur. Early castration may also be appropriate if an entire bitch also lives in the household or if it is a stipulation following adoption.

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.

The procedure

A pre-operative consultation is booked with your vet to discuss the procedure and check your dog is fit to undergo a general anaesthetic.

To reduce risks of problems under general anaesthetic no food should be fed from the evening before the day of operation. Water can be left down all night though.

On the day of the operation your dog will be admitted and given an injection of pain relief and a little sedation to help him feel at ease whilst waiting for his surgery.

Once under general anaesthetic, a small skin incision is made just in front of the scrotum and both testicles are removed.

Most dogs are able to go home the same afternoon but they must be rested to allow healing. This means restricting your pet to no more than short lead walks for 10-14 days post-operatively.

A 'buster collar' or t-shirt, may be required to prevent your dog licking the wound and causing an infection.

Post-operative checks with your vet are required after the operation to check everything is healing well and to advise when it is safe to begin exercising again.

