

Routine Neuter Operations

The information here covers:

- Preoperative procedures
- Admission procedures
- Contacting the in patient nurse to check progress and arrange collection
- All about Cat Neutering
- All about Dog Neutering
- All about Rabbit Neutering

Pre-operative arrangements

Making your appointment: For routine neutering, Please try to ring a week in advance to organise your pets operation.

Pre-anaesthetic preparation

Dogs and cats should be starved from 10pm on the night prior to an anaesthetic.

They should be allowed access to drinking water up until morning.

Cats should ideally be kept in overnight to prevent access to food outside (hunting etc)

Dogs should be walked or given the opportunity to pass urine and faeces prior to coming to the surgery, but shouldn't be allowed to get excessively wet or dirty.

Rabbits and other small mammals don't need to be starved prior to an anaesthetic.

Ferrets should be starved for four hours before an anaesthetic.

On the day

- A vet or qualified nurse will admit your pet.
- They will need to ask a few of the following questions:
- Is your pet in good health and a suitable age?
- Have they been starved?
- Are they fully vaccinated?
- Are they microchipped yet? (if not would you like this doing whilst your pet is asleep?)

There will be a health and weight check then you will be asked to complete and read a consent form giving us a number we can contact you on if necessary during the day. Please make sure that you are able to take our call in case of emergencies.

CATS

Cat Spay

We routinely only spay cats that are at least 6 months old. We don't routinely spay obviously pregnant animals. Cats with a pointed coat eg. Siamese/Balinese/Ragdolls/Birmans which have darker a colour on the ears and tail may develop darker hair in the shaved areas. If appropriate you will be offered a mid-line spay rather than on their side. Where this does occur it is temporary. Avoiding the flank is normally only necessary for show cats and must be discussed at admission.

Why spay a cat?

- Cats can have 2-3 litters each year of upto 6 kittens in each litter. They can start breeding from 2.5kg of weight (usually 6 months).
- Your cat will have a season roughly every 3 weeks, lasting 1 week, from the spring time until autumn.
- During a season your cat may be very noisy meowing for a mate and also show strange behavioural signs of rolling and lifting her bottom. These behaviour signs will disappear once spayed.
- During a season your cat will be desperate to get outside and there is a great increase in the risk of becoming lost or involved in a road traffic accident.
- Spaying a cat removes chances of further problems of ovarian or uterine disease

Potential side effects/ complications of spaying

- Anaesthetic/ surgical risks are very low in healthy animals.
- Occasional wound infections or self trauma may occur about the wound (rare). All cat spays will be sent home with a buster collar to help prevent self trauma.

Cat Castration

We routinely castrate cats from 5 ½ to 6 months of age.

Why castrate a cat?

- An uncastrated cat is more likely to spray (urine mark its territory) in the house. Castration after this has started is not as effective at stopping spraying as earlier castration is at preventing it.
- Uncastrated cats are more likely to get into fights for territory and need regular visits to vets due to cat bite abscesses. The cost of treatment for an abscess is likely to be more than the cost of castration.
- Cats are more likely to become infected with FIV ('Feline AIDS') through bite wounds if uncastrated.
- Entire male cats stray further in search of female company
- Cats are more likely to get hit by a car if uncastrated as they will stray further.
- Uncastrated cats can be a social nuisance, fighting with other neighbourhood cats and fathering many unwanted litters.

Post-op care

Female cats that have been spayed will need to have a post operative check three days after the surgery to check the wound is healing as expected. We recommend that female cats stay indoors at least a week after the surgery and the buster collar has been removed.

Male cats that have been castrated do not generally need to be seen after the operation, there are no stitches. We recommend that male cats be kept indoors 24 hours after surgery.

DOGS

Bitch Spay

Your dog should generally be aged 6 months or older.

Seasons

It is not necessary to have had a season to be spayed. Equally it is not 'a good idea' to have a litter of pups unless you are experienced with breeding dogs. It is an easier and quicker operation for your dog if spayed at 6 month of age, before the first season.

- Please let the vet/nurse know if your dog has had a season and when the last one was seen.
- Ideally we will wait 3 months following a season to spay a dog as there are increased surgical and hormonal risks if spayed too soon after a season.

Why spay a bitch?

- Spaying significantly reduces the risk of mammary tumours if performed before the first or second season. 1 in 2000 develop mammary tumours if spayed before first season compared to 1 in 4 if spayed after the second.
- Prevention of future uterine problems such as life threatening infections of the uterus.
- Prevents unwanted pregnancy, false pregnancies and the hassle of seasons.

Potential side effects/ complications of spaying

- Anaesthetic/ surgical risks (very low in healthy animals).
- Spayed dogs have a lower metabolism so need to be fed 10-15% less to prevent obesity - also saving you money on dog food!
- No proven link but may be a factor in urinary incontinence in old age. However if this were to occur it is easily controlled by medication.
- Transient false pregnancy can occur in some bitches shortly after spaying, especially in older bitches. This is more likely if spayed within 3 months of a season. It is easily treated.

Delayed Spaying

We recommend in female retrievers and rottweilers that these animals are spayed after they are over one year of age. A recent study has found links between early spaying and certain types of cancers in these two breeds.

If you have an anxious bitch then spaying can make the anxiety worse. Hormones are behaviour modulators and give us confidence. If we take that away too soon in anxious animals it can lead to other associated behaviour problems. Please speak to Julie about this if you have any questions.

The overall recommendation at the moment is that we should continue to spay female dogs as the pros far outweigh the cons.

Post operation care

- On the night you get home offer her water and bland food such as chicken and rice. If you would like us to provide you with a tin of chicken and rice after the operation please ask the nurse to dispense one for you.
- Dogs are sometime sick with more complex food after an operation.
- Keep her on the lead for 7 days following the operation, lifting her into the car and preventing her from climbing steps.
- Check the wound daily for any signs of discomfort or infection

- We will also send her home with a buster collar to prevent self trauma.
- Your pet will be sent home with pain relief for a few days after the operation which is included in the price.

Dog Castration

We routinely castrate from 6 months of age.

Why Castrate a dog?

Behaviour

- Castrated dogs are less likely to develop signs of hypersexuality, such as mounting other dogs, peoples legs etc
- Less chance of inter-male aggression.
- Less chance of wandering and escape in the hunt for bitches.
- Reduced desire to urine mark.

NB/ In dogs castrated over 2 years of age, there is less chance of improving hormonally driven behavioural problems by the procedure.

Health Benefits/ Prophylaxis

- Precludes the development of testicular tumours
- Reduces development of prostatic disease, perineal hernias and certain peri-anal growths.

Possible side effects/ disadvantages of castrating dogs

- Anaesthetic/ surgical risks (These are very low in healthy animals).
- Castrated dogs have a lower metabolism so need to be fed 10-15% less to prevent obesity occurring also saving you money on dog food!
- Not all male dogs develop hypersexuality behavioural problems and can lead normal happy lives if left entire. Generally there is no disadvantage to waiting until the dog is a little older to decide whether to castrate ie. doesn't have to be done at 6 months.

RABBITS

Rabbit Neutering

Sexual maturity is reached between 4 and 6 months of age (small breeds earlier than large breeds). We will therefore neuter rabbits from 4 months of age.

The procedure is simple and can be covered when booking in your rabbit to see the Vet.

You will be able to collect your pet later in the afternoon.

Unlike cats and dogs, rabbits should not be starved before or after operations.

Rabbits do not like stress and every effort is made by White Cliffs Vets to minimise this.

Why spay a rabbit?

- 50% to 80% of un-spayed rabbits over 4 years of age will develop uterine adenocarcinoma (cancer). Spaying prevents this problem
- Other uterine and ovarian diseases will be prevented by spaying
- Spaying often improves the temperament towards people and other rabbits
- Removes risk of unwanted pregnancy
- Greatly assists with litter training
- Some unneutered female rabbits can show signs of aggression.

Why castrate a rabbit?

- Can help to improve temperament
- Reduces unwanted sexual behaviour such as mounting people/ objects and urine marking
- Removes risk of unwanted pregnancy, if kept with an entire female
- Greatly assists with litter training

We like to send rabbits home after their surgery once we observe them eating. The drugs that we give rabbits while they are undergoing their procedure include a drug that maintains gut motility. Rabbits also receive a 24 hour pain relief as do cats and dogs. We do not generally send rabbits home with additional pain relief but we do get the very occasional rabbit that is quiet the next day.

Please telephone us if this is the case with your rabbit and we can see them. It is a good idea if your rabbit is normally housed outside to keep them in for at least 24 hours so that you can observe them.

¹All pets being neutered will have intravenous or subcutaneous fluid therapy while they are under the anaesthetic. This is also included in the price.

¹ Information correct at 1.7.17