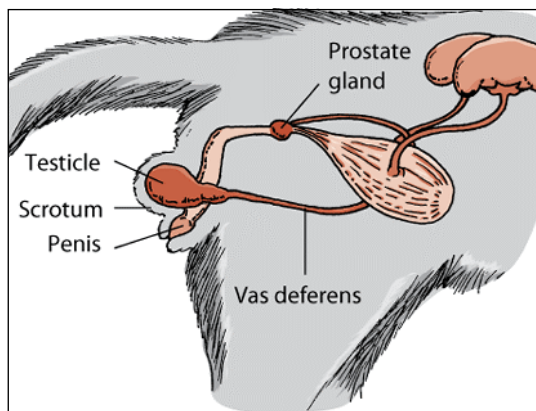


---

# Neutering in Cats

---



## ***What is meant by castration or neutering?***

Neutering and castration are the common terms for *orchidectomy* or *orchiectomy* which is the surgical removal of the testicles. In this procedure, both testicles are removed in order to sterilize a male cat and make them unable to reproduce.

## ***Why should I have my cat neutered?***

Once a male cat reaches puberty, he will often develop a number of behavioural changes that may make him a less desirable pet. They often become territorial and start to mark areas, even inside the house, by spraying urine. This urine has a particularly offensive odor that is difficult to remove. He may start to enlarge his territory, attempting to stray ever farther from the house, particularly at night. By increasing the size of his territory, he increases the likelihood that he will encounter other cats and get into fights for territorial dominance. The longer a tomcat sprays and fights, the less likely neutering will stop these behaviours. Fight wounds can result in severe infections and abscesses. Diseases such as FIV and FeLV, which cause immunosuppression and AIDS-like syndromes, are spread through cat populations via bites. These incurable diseases tend to be more common in non-neutered male cats. Animal shelters are often overrun with unwanted kittens and neutering decreases the number of cats needing homes or those being euthanized if homes cannot be found.

## ***When should I have my cat neutered?***

In most cases, we recommend neutering your cat before the onset of puberty. Puberty normally begins between six and ten months of age. Forest Grove Vet Clinic recommends felines are castrated at around five to seven months of age.

## ***What does the operation involve?***

You will need to withhold food prior to the procedure; your cat can have free access to water during most of the pre-operative fasting period. Your veterinarian will advise you how long to withhold food and water before surgery.

Your cat will be given a combination of medications to anesthetize him and provide pain control.

---

In male cats, both of the testicles are removed through small incisions in the scrotum. Since the incisions are very small, and since stitches may cause irritation of the sensitive skin of the scrotum, it is rare for the incisions to be sutured.

***What surgical complications could arise?***

Complications are rare during a cat neuter. However, as with all surgical procedures, there is always a small risk. Potential complications may include:

**Anesthetic complications:**

- Any individual cat may have an unexpected adverse reaction following the administration of any drug or anesthetic. Such cases are impossible to predict, but are extremely rare.
- Another possible danger associated with anesthesia may arise if the cat is not properly fasted prior to anesthesia. Anesthetized patients lose the normal reflex ability to swallow. During swallowing, the epiglottis, a cartilage flap at the entrance to the windpipe, closes and prevents food or water from entering the lungs. If there is food in his stomach, the cat could vomit while under anesthesia or in the early post-anesthetic period, allowing the food to enter the lungs and cause aspiration pneumonia, a potentially life-threatening condition.
- Concurrent illness will increase the risks associated with anesthesia.
- To minimize the risks, it is important that all pre-operative instructions are strictly followed and that you report any signs of illness or previous medical conditions to your veterinarian prior to any sedation, anesthesia or surgery.



**Post-operative infection:**

This may occur internally or externally around the incision site. In most cases, the infection can be controlled with antibiotics. A post-operative infection most commonly occurs when the cat licks the surgical site excessively.

***What adverse effects might castration have on my cat?***

In the vast majority of cats, no adverse effects are noted following neutering. In certain cats, notably the Siamese breed, the hair that grows back over an operation site may be noticeably darker. This is believed to be due to the difference in the skin temperature. This darker patch usually grows out with the following molt as the hair is naturally replaced.