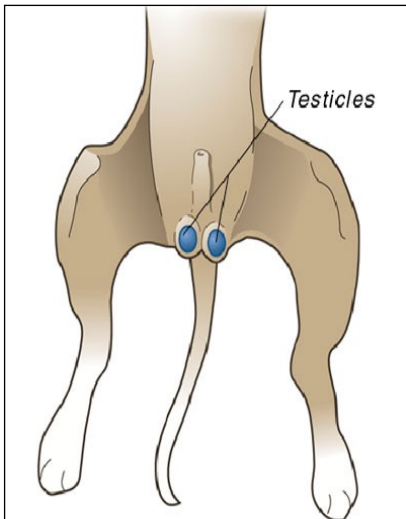

Neutering in Dogs



What is meant by 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 dog and make them unable to reproduce.

What are the advantages of neutering my male dog?

- Elimination of unplanned/unwanted litters of puppies born into the world
- Reduces the risk of benign prostatic enlargement and inflammation
- Reduces the risk of hormone-related diseases such as perianal adenomas
- Eliminates the risk of testicular cancer (the second most common cancer in intact dogs)
- Removes sexual urges, which usually leads to a decrease in roaming behaviours
- Reduces certain types of aggression
- Reduces the urge to 'mark' or urinate inappropriately in the house

Is neutering performed for any other reason?

Neutering may be used in attempt to treat certain forms of aggression. In older dogs, the operation may be performed to treat testicular tumors and some prostate gland conditions. It is also used to control hormone (testosterone) dependent disease such as perianal adenomas.

What are the disadvantages of neutering?

Most of the perceived disadvantages are false. A commonly quoted myth is that the dog will become fat, lazy and useless as a guard dog. Obesity is probably the most commonly quoted disadvantage of neutering. Obesity is the result of overfeeding and lack of physical activity. By regulating your dog's diet and caloric intake, you can prevent obesity in neutered or intact dogs.

When should the neuter operation be performed?

We recommend waiting until a dog's adult teeth have erupted before neutering. This is generally at six months of age. There is now some evidence that for some breeds (especially large breed dogs), or certain individual dogs, waiting until they are 12-18 months of age to neuter them has some health benefits. These possible benefits need to be weighed against the inconvenience and management of living with an adolescent, intact male dog; and the potential increased cost of neutering an older, larger dog. Please do not hesitate to bring any questions or concerns about the timing of this surgery to our veterinarians.

Are there any dangers associated with the operation?

In general, complications are rare during a neuter. However, as with any anesthetic or surgical procedure, there is always a small risk. The potential complications include:

- **Anesthetic reaction.**
 - Any individual dog 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 dog 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 dog could vomit while under anesthesia or in the early post-anesthetic period, allowing food to enter the lungs and cause aspiration pneumonia, a potentially life-threatening condition.
 - Illness will increase the risks associated with anesthesia. Pre-operative blood work may be a useful screening tool that may pick up existing problems that could interfere with the dog's ability to handle anesthetic drugs. (We may recommend blood work prior to surgery particularly in older dogs, but generally don't recommend or require this in young, healthy dogs).
 - 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.
- **Internal bleeding.**
 - This can occur if a ligature around a blood vessel breaks or slips off. This is very rare, and is more likely to occur if the dog is extremely active post surgery. Clinical signs include weakness, pale gums, depression, anorexia or distended tissue in the groin area.
- **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 dog licks the surgical site excessively or is in a damp environment.

- **Suture Reaction.**

- Occasionally the body will react to certain types of suture material used during surgery. The surgical area may become swollen, and a little red. It is important to ensure your dog is not licking excessively at his incision.

What happens when my dog undergoes this procedure?

Your pet will be given a combination of sedatives, pain management medication and anesthetic agents. He will have an intravenous catheter placed to administer medication and fluid therapy during the surgery. After your pet is anesthetized, a breathing tube will be placed in his trachea or ‘windpipe’ to deliver oxygen and gas anesthetic directly into the lungs. A small incision is made in the skin in front of the scrotum and the testicles are isolated and removed. We use absorbable internal sutures so that you do not have to return your dog to the hospital to have them removed.

Are there any post-operative precautions I should take?

Rest and restriction of activity post-operatively is important. Most dogs can resume normal activity five to ten days after surgery. Until then, leash walks, lots of rest, and no swimming, bathing or vigorous activity. Monitoring the incision site for any redness, pain, swelling or discharge until fully healed is recommended.

