

# Neutering For Dogs Explained

If you are not going to breed from your pet we recommend neutering as this prevents unexpected and unwanted litters as well as reducing the risk of significant health problems for your pet as they get older.

Neutering also reduces behaviours linked to hormonal changes.



WARWICK SOUTHAM KENILWORTH WELLESBOURNE STRATFORD



## Female Dogs

Neutering for female pets is referred to as 'spaying'. This is in effect an ovario-hysterectomy removing both the uterus and ovaries and so permanently preventing pregnancy. Although this is major abdominal surgery our vets are doing this procedure several times every week and are skilled and experienced. Your pet will have stitches on her abdomen and will need to take it easy for 10 days until they are removed. Bitches are usually spayed along the midline of their abdomen.

As well as preventing any unwanted litters spaying at a young age significantly reduces the incidences of mammary tumours in older pets and prevents serious uterine infections (pyometra). After your pet has been spayed she will no longer 'come into season' and any behaviour changes linked to hormonal fluctuations will disappear.

## When to Neuter

If not breeding it is generally recommended that both male and female pets be neutered when they reach sexual maturity.

Most bitches can be spayed at 6 months old prior to their first season.

For some larger breeds, over 25kg, our vets recommend that they are spayed between their first and second season. This is because occasionally larger breeds experience some urinary incontinence as they get older when they have been neutered early. However leaving it beyond the second season greatly reduces the protective effect for later mammary tumours etc.

Even in her first season a bitch will be ready to mate. Her genitals may appear swollen or have some discharge and she may behave erratically.

Great care should be taken to prevent her coming into contact with an entire male dog during this period which may be up to 3 weeks.

Generally we recommend that larger breeds are spayed 3 months after their first season when the sexual hormones are at the least active part of the cycle.

## Male Dogs

Neutering for male pets is termed 'castration' and involves surgically removing the testes. This is a short procedure done under general anaesthetic by your vet. A small number of stitches are used which will need to be removed later. Male pets rarely have complications following castration and behave completely normally. Their testosterone levels are reduced often improving hormone related aggression or domineering behaviour. For the same reason neutered male cats are less likely to roam in search of a mate.

Castration at a young age also significantly reduces the incidences of testicular cancers and prostate problems.

## When to Neuter

If not breeding it is generally recommended that both male and female pets be neutered when they reach sexual maturity.

This is at around 5 months for male dogs who will be displaying visible testes at this age. Very occasionally one or both of the testes are retained internally. This is referred to as 'cryptorchid' and requires a more complex surgical procedure to remove them. Our vets will explain the procedure in advance should this be the case.

Our vets perform neutering procedures regularly from Monday to Friday every week. However, we understand that this is usually your pet's first stay with us and we take every care to treat your dog as an individual and to ensure that it is as stress free for you and your pet as possible. We can book your dog in on a day that is convenient for you

### **The Night Before**

You will be asked not to allow your dog food or water after midnight so that your dog has an empty stomach for the operation the next day and to walk him or her on a lead in the morning to empty bladder and bowels.

### **Admission**

The nurse will admit your dog first thing in the morning. Your pet will be weighed and examined to ensure he or she is in good health to undergo a general anaesthetic.

As with all surgery, there is a small risk attached to having a general anaesthetic. A pre-anaesthetic diagnostic blood test can highlight any underlying health problems that are not yet showing symptoms and may affect the anaesthetic. There is a separate charge for this and it is optional however your vet may recommend it where your pet is known already to have compromised health.

You will be asked to complete a consent form and provide contact details for that day.

### **Settling In**

Your dog will then be settled into one of our kennels and given a pre-operative sedative.

### **Anaesthesia**

We use up to date drugs and equipment allowing pets to wake up quickly and experience fewer side-effects than with some older or cheaper products. A qualified nurse keeps a detailed record of the anaesthesia and monitors your pet throughout.

## **Surgery**

During the procedure the vets will need to shave the surgical site and areas where intravenous medication is administered. To minimise the risk of infection all internal surgery is performed in a dedicated sterile operating theatre. A freshly autoclaved (sterilised) surgical pack of instruments and drapes is used for each procedure exactly as it is in human surgery.

Our vets are all experienced in surgical techniques and perform gentle skilled surgery with the comfort and care of your pet as their priority. Scarring is minimised as far as possible with high quality suture or stapling materials.

### **Recovery and Pain Relief**

An initial analgesic is given with the pre-operative sedative. This is then effective as soon as surgery begins and ensures that your pet experiences the minimum of discomfort. Pain relief is continued throughout the procedure and the nurse carefully monitors your pet's recovery.

### **Collecting your Pet**

Your appointment will be with the surgical nurse who will talk you through the operation and explain how to look after your pet at home. This is supported with a written care sheet for you to follow. A plastic collar will be recommended to prevent your pet chewing or scratching any stitches. A **Post-Op Check-up** appointment will be arranged, usually 2 days after the procedure. If your pet has stitches these will need to be removed by the nurse approximately 10 days after the procedure. Provided no further medication or dressings are required these appointments are included in the neutering fee.

For further information about how we look after your dog during surgical procedures please see our 'Bringing your pet for Surgery' leaflet.

### **24 Hour Emergency Care**

Very occasionally animals experience adverse reactions after surgery. Our 24 Hour emergency service means that if you have concerns about your pet, you can contact an Avonvale vet at any time. All our registered clients receive a 50% discount on the separate Out of Hours fee charged for this service.

### **Neutering Fees (inc. VAT)**

Our neutering fees include the complete care described in this leaflet unless otherwise stated.

**Dog Castration - £135.00**

**Bitch Spay - £220.00**

Discounts of up to 25% are available for dogs registered on

**Junior Pet Club and Pet Club Plus**



**Ask about these pet care plans at reception**

For more information  
please contact your Avonvale Vet

**Avonvale**

Veterinary Centres

Warwick: 01926 400255  
Southam: 01926 812826  
Kenilworth: 01926 854181  
Wellesbourne: 01789 841072  
Stratford: 01789 561010

[www.avonvets.co.uk](http://www.avonvets.co.uk)