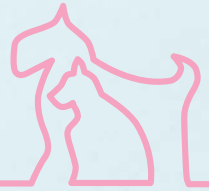


Neutering



**Revised
2008**

pdca responsible pet care

Neutering

What is it?

Neutering is a surgical procedure carried out by a vet to prevent an animal from producing offspring. It stops unwanted pregnancies and helps to reduce the problem of stray and abandoned pets.



Neutering can be performed on many types of pets. Your vet will be able to advise you about neutering, the best time to have it done and the pet health benefits associated with it.

In male animals the testicles are removed and the procedure is called 'castration'. In female animals the operation usually involves removal

of the ovaries and uterus (womb) and is called 'spaying'.

Neutering is a vital part of responsible pet ownership. It is something that pet owners should discuss with their vet as soon as they have a pet because neutering can lengthen the life span of pets and increase their quality of life.

There are many myths associated with neutering. One is that a female pet should have one litter before spaying, but in fact it is better to have a pet neutered before this. Ideally, breeding from a pet should be left to the professionals.

Another myth is that neutered pets gain weight after the operation. A pet generally gains weight because it consumes more calories than it expends. Neutered dogs actually need about a fifth less food than those that have not been neutered, so making sure that a pet gets the right amount of food and exercise will keep it in shape. Ask your vet for advice about your pet's diet after the operation.

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Why do it?

Female cats

Neutering female cats involves the removal of the ovaries and the uterus (womb). A neutered female cat will therefore not develop cancer of the ovaries or uterus, nor will it suffer from other infections of the uterus in later life.

When an un-neutered female cat is in season, she can appear distressed, and may also spray around the house or the garden to 'advertise' her availability.

From the age of sexual maturity, which can be as young as 4 months of age, a healthy female cat can produce up to three litters a year with possibly five or six kittens per litter. Motherhood takes a lot out of a cat, and having repeated litters may shorten her life expectancy.



Male cats

Neutered male cats are less likely to be aggressive, and castration also prevents unwanted pregnancies.



Castrated cats do not usually spray inside or outside the home and are less likely to roam or fight. They will also not develop tumours of the testicles.

Another benefit of male cat neutering relates to Feline Leukaemia Virus (FeLV) and Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV). These are serious diseases spread through saliva. Neutered cats are less likely to get into fights, which means they are less likely to get bitten and to be infected with these diseases. They are also less likely to develop abscesses from bites, which are another common cause of illness.

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Female dogs

The main reason for neutering female dogs (bitches) is to stop them from having puppies, helping to reduce the number of unwanted puppies and stray dogs abandoned in later life. A neutered bitch will not come into season, and so will not be 'attractive' to male dogs.

Neither will a neutered bitch develop problems connected with pregnancy or diseases of the uterus and ovaries. All of these diseases are potentially serious, but the main life-threatening one is called pyometra. In this condition, infection accumulates in the womb and usually the dog needs urgent surgery.

In neutered females there is also a decreased incidence of mammary (breast) tumours and problems associated with false pregnancies, such as milk production, depression and lack of appetite.

Male dogs

Neutering is a much simpler operation in male dogs than it is in female dogs. Not only does neutering prevent unwanted puppies, but it may also reduce hormone-induced roving, sexual urges and aggression.

Neutered dogs will not develop testicular cancer, and other diseases, such as prostate problems, are much reduced.



Neutering

Female ferrets

It is very important to control the reproductive cycle in non-breeding female ferrets (jills). If they are not mated this leads to high levels of female hormones. This can cause progressive depression of the bone marrow, which develops into a debilitating and potentially fatal disease called pancytopenia.

Female ferrets come into season in the first spring after they are born. It is usually best to neuter the ferret within the first year before her season has begun. Your ferret's vet will be able to advise you about this.

Male ferrets

Neutering male ferrets (hobs) can reduce dominant behaviour, as well as their musky odour.



Female rabbits

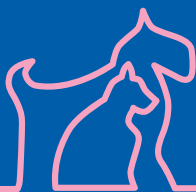
Neutering female rabbits (does) prevents unwanted litters but also eliminates the behaviour associated with sexual hormones, such as nesting, aggression and mood swings.

Neutering also means infections of the uterus will not develop. Cancer of the uterus is one of the most common conditions seen in un-neutered does. It can develop in does over two years old, and up to 80 per cent of rabbits can be affected by the time they reach eight years old.



Male rabbits

Neutering male rabbits (bucks) eliminates behavioural changes linked to hormones, such as urine spraying and aggression.



PDSA vets advise:

“Getting your pet neutered is a vital part of responsible pet care. Neutering has many health benefits in both the short and long term.”

PDSA PetAid hospitals provide a range of paid-for preventive treatments for the pets of eligible clients including neutering, vaccinations, microchipping, prescription diets, and flea and worm treatments.

PDSA is very grateful to Cats Protection (www.cats.org.uk) and Dogs Trust (www.dogstrust.org.uk) for their financial support of cat and dog neutering at its PetAid hospitals.

To find out if you qualify for PDSA veterinary care, freephone **0800 731 2502**.

For more information on PDSA and its work, email: info@pdsa.org.uk
freephone: **0800 917 2509**
visit: www.pdsa.org.uk

PDSA Head Office
Whitechapel Way, Priorslee,
Telford, Shropshire TF2 9PQ

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