

Rabbit neutering during Covid-19 lockdown

Overview

- Due to Covid-19 restrictions, some veterinary practices aren't able to offer procedures such as neutering at present.
- Unneutered bunnies are at a higher risk of pregnancy, roaming, getting into fights, behavioural problems and catching certain diseases. Female rabbits can get pregnant from three months old.
- **Rabbits will mate even if they are related!**
- Keep unneutered rabbits of the opposite sex separate from three months old.

Can I have my rabbit neutered during lockdown?

During lockdown, vets are having to prioritise the sickest pets, which means that many routine procedures such as neutering have been delayed or cancelled.



The British Veterinary Association (BVA) and Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) have asked vets across the UK to prioritise urgent/essential treatment, and to comply with social distancing at all times. This has led to major changes in the way veterinary practices run, and has meant that many practices have

had to postpone or completely stop offering routine procedures such as neutering and [vaccinations](#) to enable them to continue treating the sickest pets.

Your vet is likely to be issuing updates on their service so keep checking their website and any updates they send by email, text or letter. If you're unable to find out about the services your vet is providing, you may need to call them to discuss. It's important to remember that your vets are extremely busy adapting to the ever changing challenges of the pandemic, and doing their best to care for some very sick pets - they will really appreciate your patience and understanding.

I am a PDSA client and I want to have my rabbit neutered, what do I do?

We at PDSA are currently facing a huge demand for our services, and at present, our priority has to be treating pets in need of urgent or lifesaving treatment. Unfortunately, this means that **we are not currently able to offer preventive services such as neutering and vaccinations.**

Although we hope to provide these services at some point, it's likely that a reduced service will continue into the foreseeable future. For this reason, we recommend that our clients find another veterinary practice for their pet's vaccinations and neutering. Try your local private practice, or use the [RCVS website to find vets in your local area](#). Don't worry, even if your rabbit is neutered/vaccinated elsewhere, you will still be registered at PDSA should they become unwell at any point. [Click here for PDSA service updates](#). We really appreciate your patience and support during this difficult time.

Risks of being unneutered

Pregnancy

The most obvious risk of being unneutered is pregnancy, and rabbits can mate from three months old, **even if they are related!**

Illness

In the long term, unneutered rabbits are at increased risk of certain cancers, for example uterine cancer and testicular cancers.

Fighting

Unneutered rabbits (especially two rabbits of the same-sex) are more likely to fight. Unneutered rabbits are also more likely to act aggressively towards their owners.

Urine spraying

Unneutered rabbits are more likely to spray urine to mark their territory.

Keeping your unneutered rabbit safe

Keep male and females apart

Keep male and female unneutered rabbits apart from three months old. Unneutered rabbits can breed even if they are related (i.e. brothers/sisters and father/daughters).

Keep wild rabbits out

Keep your pet rabbits away from wild rabbits by rabbit proofing your garden or double fencing their living space if they live outdoors. If you have enough space to keep them happy, you might want to keep your rabbits inside until they are neutered and vaccinated.

Check if you can have them neutered elsewhere

If your vet isn't able to neuter your rabbit at present, try another local vet practice, or use the [RCVS website to find vets in your local area](#).

FAQ's

My rabbits have started fighting, what can I do?

Although rabbits love to have company, they sometimes find it difficult to get on with their bunny friends at times, and it's very important to step in if you notice changes in their relationship.

Signs of a problem include:

- Excessive humping
- Fighting
- Biting
- Pulling each other's fur

Fighting is most common in rabbits once they reach sexual maturity (like puberty in humans), and can even be a problem in rabbits that have up until that point, been really good mates!

Fighting behaviour can be improved by neutering.

If your rabbits are fighting regularly, contact your vet to discuss neutering, separate them, but make sure they can still see and smell each other. Try putting two cages or runs next to each other and swapping them over every few days. Hopefully, once they're neutered, you will be able to reintroduce them.

My rabbits are humping each other, what should I do?

Mounting behaviour (or humping) is not always related to hormones, and is often a sign that your rabbits are trying to sort out who's boss. Unless your rabbits are humping each other all the time, or it's becoming a problem, don't worry too much and don't separate them. Neutered rabbits will often still mount, nip and pull each other's fur from time to time.

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