

# Dog Neutering During the Pandemic

## Overview

- During the pandemic, some veterinary practices (including PDSA) have had to delay their preventative services (such as neutering) in order to prioritise sick and injured pets.
- Unneutered dogs can get pregnant, suffer with problems such as pyometra (an infected womb), and develop certain behavioural traits.
- Female dogs can have a season and get pregnant any time from 5-6 months old.
- If your vet isn't able to neuter your dog at the moment, you may want to contact another practice in your area to see if they can help.
- If you can't have your dog neutered, it's important to keep him/her safe until you can.

## General information

**During the pandemic, vets are having to prioritise the sickest pets, which means that many routine procedures such as neutering are being 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. Sadly, this means that some practices are unable to offer their routine procedures such as neutering, [vaccinations](#), and microchipping. If your vet is unable to neuter your dog at this time, you may want to contact some other local vets to see if they are able to help, and in the meanwhile, follow our guidance below to keep them safe. Please keep in mind that your vets will be doing their best to care for some very sick pets and will really appreciate your patience and understanding during this challenging time.

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

**Sadly, PDSA are not currently able to offer preventive services such as neutering.** This is because, we are facing a huge demand for our services, and at the moment, our priority is treating pets in need of urgent or lifesaving treatment. We hope to start providing preventive services again at some point, but it's likely that a reduced service will continue into the foreseeable future. We recommend that our clients find another veterinary practice for their pet's vaccinations - try your local private practice, or use the [RCVS website to find vets in your local area](#). Don't worry, even if your dog is neutered elsewhere, they will stay registered with us should they become unwell at any point. We really appreciate your patience and support during this difficult time.

[Click here for PDSA service updates.](#)

## Risks of being unneutered

### Pregnancy

Unwanted pregnancy is the most obvious risk of being unneutered. Female dogs can get pregnant when they are in season (on heat), and any unneutered dogs can mate, even if they are related, different breeds or different sizes. Your puppy will have her first season anytime between 5-18 months old and then again every 6 months.

## Illness

Speying/castrating has many health benefits, and unneutered pets are at a higher risk of developing conditions such as [pyometra \(womb infections\)](#), false pregnancy and prostate problems (males only).

## Unwanted behaviours

There are certain behaviours that can develop in unneutered dogs that can be quite difficult for pet owners to deal with. In some circumstances, unneutered dogs can show aggression towards other dogs and sometimes humans. Both male and female dogs can develop sexual behaviours such as 'humping', which is natural but sometimes disruptive, especially if they hump people or other pets.

## Keeping your unneutered dog safe

### Female

If you have an unneutered female dog, while she is in season/on heat you will need to keep her separate from **all** unneutered male dogs and on the lead during walks. After each season you should monitor for signs of [pyometra \(womb infection\)](#) or false pregnancy.

### Male dogs

If you have an unneutered male dog, you will need to keep him away from any unneutered females in season, be careful around other entire male dogs (aggression is slightly more likely), and monitor for any signs of a problem with his penis or testicles.

### Check if you can have them neutered elsewhere

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

## FAQ's

### Both my female and male dog are unneutered, what shall I do?

If you have an unneutered male and female dog, you will need to keep them completely separate while your female dog is in season (which usually lasts between 2-4 weeks). They will both be very motivated to get to each

other, so you will need to keep them distracted and in secure areas. If possible, it may be easier for someone else to look after your male dog while your female is in season.

### **My dog has accidentally mated, what should I do?**

If your dog has accidentally mated, contact your vet to discuss your options.

### **My dog is humping all the time, what should I do?**

There are lots of reasons why dogs start to hump. It can sometimes be due to hormones, but it can also be due to excitement or habit (many neutered dogs still hump). If it's becoming a problem, the best thing to do is distract them from doing it. **Never tell your dog off for humping, it's a natural behaviour that can be discouraged and ignored, but not punished - they simply won't understand.**

- Gently move him/her off whatever he/she is humping.
- Once they have calmed, reward them with a treat or toy.
- If your dog continues to hump, quietly and gently put him/her into another room for a minute or two (to calm down).
- Then call him out and reward him/her for doing a trick such as 'sit', 'paw' or 'lie down'. This will distract him/her and encourage more 'favourable' behaviours instead of humping.
- You might also want to find other ways to help your dog use up his/her energy, for example scattering food round the house, or training him to do some new tricks. Contact your vet for advice if your dog's behaviour is causing a serious problem.

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