Rabbit neutering during Covid-19 lockdown

Overview

- During Covid-19 lockdown, your veterinary practice might not be able to offer routine procedures such as neutering.
- Staying entire (unneutered), puts your bunny at a higher risk of pregnancy and in the long term, certain illnesses and behavioural problems.
- A female rabbit 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, UK vets are prioritising the sickest pets, which means that in most circumstances, routine procedures such as neutering will not be possible during this time (this may vary between practices).

The British Veterinary Association (BVA) and Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) have asked vets across the UK to provide urgent/essential treatment only and to maintain social

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distancing at all times. This will mean a delay in routine procedures such as neutering and [vaccinations](#), but will enable vets to continue treating the sickest pets whilst protecting the general public, veterinary staff and NHS.

Get in touch to arrange for your rabbits to be neutered once your vet is running a full service again.

Risks of being unneutered

Pregnancy

- The most obvious risk of being unneutered is an pregnancy.
- 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.

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- If you have enough space to keep them happy, you might want to keep your rabbits inside until they are neutered and vaccinated.

My rabbits have started fighting, what can I do?

Although rabbits love to have company, they can find it quite 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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