

If you are not intending to use your pet for breeding, neutering should be considered for the following reasons:

Spaying of Bitches:

The spaying operation, or ovariohysterectomy, involves a general anaesthetic, with removal of the **ovaries** and **the entire uterus** down to the level of the cervix, via an incision in the midline of the abdomen of the bitch.

- **Unwanted pups are prevented** - this removes the problems associated with finding homes or increasing the stray population.
- **No false pregnancy** - false pregnancy is very common in bitches, and can occur after each season. It may result in distress to the bitch and anguish to the owner. A bitch undergoing a false pregnancy may produce milk, lose her appetite and become quite aggressive. Phantom pregnancies may become more severe with each season.
- **Pyometra and other womb and ovarian diseases are avoided** - unspayed bitches can develop pyometra (a pus filled womb) late in life which then requires life-saving surgery. Spaying a healthy bitch does not involve the risks of spaying an older bitch with complications from the pyometra.
- **Reduced risk of mammary tumours** - the relative risk of mammary tumours increases progressively with each season. The earlier the bitch is spayed, the lower the risk.
- **No oestrus** - oestrus (season or "heat") occurs about every six months in entire bitches. During this time bitches have to be kept away from other dogs and walked under close supervision.
- **To prevent the perpetuation of genetic defects.**

Castration of Dogs:

The castration operation involves a general anaesthetic with removal of **both testicles** from the scrotal sac via an incision just in front of the scrotum.

- **As a treatment to limit straying**, particularly in response to bitches in season. Straying causes nuisance, e.g. road accidents; and unwanted litters.
- **As a treatment for excessive and unacceptable sexual behaviour** towards bitches, people and inanimate objects.
- **For medical reasons**, e.g. to prevent or remove testicular tumours, or reduce perianal adenoma or prostatic hyperplasia.
- **As a treatment in some cases of dominance aggression.** The use of hormone injections first may be helpful in determining the benefit of castration in these cases.
- **To prevent the perpetuation of genetic defects.**
- **To improve temperament-** castration rarely produces undesirable changes in temperament; in fact a dog is likely to become more attached and attentive towards its owners.

There may be some reservations about spaying, which is a major abdominal operation, and castration, but most are not justified when examined more closely as follows:

Spaying:

- Spaying may lead to a weight increase, but this can be controlled by dietary management, eg: all Guide Dogs are neutered, but maintain their ideal weight.
- Urinary incontinence can be associated with spaying but this can be controlled medically. If you are concerned about this aspect, please speak to one of our vets.
- Spaying is irreversible, and a decision to spay a young bitch may be postponed by controlling her oestrus with drugs, indefinitely if wanted. A veterinary surgeon is the best person to discuss the use of these drugs, which may cause side effects.
- It is preferable that any bitch that is in oestrus (season or "heat"), false pregnancy or markedly overweight should have surgery deferred. A veterinary surgeon is the best person to discuss the most suitable time for spaying.
- Delayed blood clotting occasionally occurs after vaccination and as a consequence spaying is best deferred until three weeks after vaccination.
- Any animal with a previous history of having a bleeding problem or having a relative with a bleeding problem should be investigated prior to undertaking any elective surgical procedure.

Endell Veterinary Group supports the BSAVA Council belief that the benefits of spaying a bitch outweigh any potential risks that are involved with the procedure.

Castration:

- A common misconception is that pets get fat because they are neutered. They only get fat if they are fed too much! After neutering, the metabolic rate will drop a little bit so that energy requirements are less. Therefore, we recommend feeding about 25% less food after neutering to help prevent weight gain.
- Delayed blood clotting occasionally occurs after vaccination, and as a consequence castration is best deferred until three weeks after vaccination.

Veterinary advice should always be sought in each individual case.



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Quick Reference Guide



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