



North Bay Animal Hospital

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Neutering in Dogs

Why should I have my dog neutered?

Neutering should be considered if you are keeping any male dog as a pet. Remember that Guide Dogs for the Blind, Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, and Dogs for the Disabled are routinely neutered, and this does not impair their ability to perform their duties.

What are the advantages of neutering my male dog?

- Reduces the risk of benign prostatic hyperplasia and prostatitis
- Reduces the risk of hormone-related diseases such as perianal adenoma
- Eliminates the risk of testicular cancer, the second most common cancer in intact dogs
- Removes sexual urges, which usually decreases roaming behaviors
- Reduces certain types of aggression

Is neutering performed for any other reason?

Neutering may be used in an attempt to treat certain forms of aggression. In older dogs, the operation may be performed to treat testicular tumors and some prostate gland conditions. It is also used to control hormonal (testosterone) dependent diseases such as perianal adenomas.

What are the disadvantages?

Most of the perceived disadvantages are false. The most quoted of these are that the dog will become fat, lazy, and useless as a guardian. Obesity is probably the most commonly quoted disadvantage of neutering. In most cases, obesity is the result of overfeeding and not exercising enough. By regulating your dog's diet and caloric intake, you can prevent obesity in both neutered and intact males.

Neutering doesn't cause a change in personality, guarding instincts, intelligence, playfulness and affection.

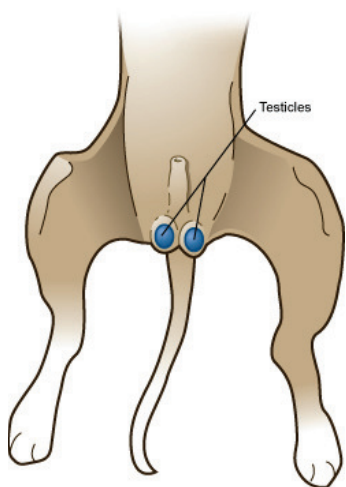
When should the operation be performed?

Most veterinarians recommend neutering at around six months of age. However, neutering at an earlier age, which is a common practice at animal shelters, does not appear to be detrimental.

Is there any alternative to surgery?

There have been recent advances in non-surgical neutering. These involve injection of a compound directly into the testicle. You should discuss this treatment with your veterinarian to determine if it is appropriate for your pet.

Are there any dangers associated with the operation?



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Neutering is considered a major operation and requires general anesthesia. With any anesthetic the risk of serious complications, including death, is always present. However, with modern anesthetics and monitoring equipment, the risk of a complication is very low. It has been said that your pet has a greater chance of being injured in a car wreck than having an anesthetic or surgical complication.

What happens when my dog undergoes this procedure?

This major surgical procedure requires general anesthesia. You will need to fast your dog the night prior to surgery.

You will be asked to admit your dog into the hospital on the morning of his procedure. You will need to plan on approximately 10–15 minutes to allow for the signing of consent forms and admission by a registered veterinary technician (RVT). The RVT assigned to your pet will follow your dog through his entire stay in the hospital, assist the veterinarian during his surgery and look after all his nursing care during her stay.

Although the sedatives, anesthetics and medications we will be using are considered very safe, they do need to be processed and eliminated by your dog's system. The liver and kidneys are partially responsible for this processing. To ensure your dog is in optimum health to process necessary medications and undergo the surgical procedure a few blood tests will be run to assess your dog's liver, kidneys, blood count and blood glucose levels. If there are any abnormalities in these results we will contact you immediately and any decisions about proceeding with the surgery will be discussed with your veterinarian.

After receiving confirmation of normal blood results, your dog will be examined by the veterinarian and if deemed fit for surgery, will be given a mild sedative by injection to relax your dog. This sedative will take 10–15 minutes to be effective. At this time an intravenous catheter will be placed in a blood vessel in the front or hind leg. A small square of skin may be clipped to allow us to sterilize the area and visualize the vein for insertion of the catheter. This catheter will be used to administer intravenous fluids during and after the surgery to ensure your dog is properly hydrated throughout the procedure and during his recovery. This also allows us to have immediate intravenous access should we need to add any medication during the procedure.

An injectable anesthetic (barbituate) is given through the intravenous line to initiate the general anesthetic. An endotracheal tube made of soft plastic is then inserted into the wind pipe to administer oxygen and a gas anesthetic, called isoflurane, to allow us to maintain your pet under general anesthesia for as long as necessary. While under anesthesia your pet will be breathing on his own but will not be awake. Your pet will not be able to feel the surgical procedure. Your dog's heart rate, blood oxygen level and blood pressure will be used to monitor him while asleep. The RVT assigned to your dog will assist the veterinarian during the entire procedure and during recovery. Her primary job will be to monitor and adjust the anesthetic on the veterinarian's direction.

A square of skin near the testicles will be shaved and prepared with a series of disinfecting solutions to sterilize the skin surface. One of these is a bright pink colour and traces of this solution may persist on the skin when your dog goes home. The clipped hair may take 8–12 weeks or more to regrow.

All of the preparation is done in the "prep" area of the hospital and then your dog is then moved to the sterile surgery area where he will be placed on a cozy sheep skin blanket on a circulating warm water blanket that is temperature controlled. Heat loss and low body temperatures during and after an anesthetic is a concern, especially in pets under 10 kg. All patients are recovered in warm blankets in our recovery area.

The operation is performed through a relatively small incision made most commonly in the midline of the lower abdomen, just above the scrotum. Both testicles are removed through the incision. The surgical incision will be closed with several layers of dissolvable sutures. These sutures will be placed below the skin and will not be visible. They will be dissolved by the body in 2–3 weeks, The procedure will take 20–30 minutes.

To ensure a smooth transition from anesthetic and to maximally control for the possibility of post-operative discomfort, your dog will be given pain medication by injection. All dogs will receive an anti-inflammatory and a morphine-like narcotic. The veterinarian and the RVT will monitor your dog's recovery and adjust post-op medication when needed. Our goal is for your dog to always be pain free.

Once your dog is awake and able to walk, he will be returned to his kennel. Many veterinary hospitals release their surgical patients the same day, but we prefer to hospitalize them over night for a few reasons. Many pets are sleepy and disoriented after a general anesthetic procedure and are safest in a confined area where they can't harm themselves. For the first 12–24 hours after surgery we can monitor food and water intake and provide an easily digestible dog food that will minimize intestinal irritation (sort of like the bland crackers and gingerale you might have after surgery). The morning following the surgery we will have the opportunity to monitor your dog's temperature, examine the incision and ensure your dog is prepared to go home. You will be provided with medication to give at home that will aid in your dog continuing to be pain free during his recovery.

Are there any post-operative precautions I should take?

"Rest and restriction of activity are the primary post-operative care you should provide."

Rest and restriction of activity are the primary post-operative care you should provide. Most dogs can resume normal activity five to ten days after surgery. Until then, leash walks, lots of rest, and no swimming, bathing, running or climbing stairs are the rule.

What things should I consider when shopping for a dog neuter?

1. What kind of anesthetics will be used?
2. Are medications sent home with your dog for post-operative pain control?
3. Does the clinic employ RVTs to help with surgeries, anesthetic monitoring, and nursing care?
4. Are surgical patients provided with intravenous fluid therapy during their procedure?
5. Where is my dog kept during her hospital stay?
6. Will my dog be hospitalized overnight? Why or why not.

7. Is preanesthetic blood work recommended to ensure safety under general anesthetic? If not recommended why not?

This client information sheet is based on material written by: Ernest Ward, DVM

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