Neutering Rabbits

Neutering is a surgical procedure to remove the ovaries and uterus in females, and the testicles in male rabbits. It is done under general anaesthetic, and although there is always a risk associated, the procedure is routine.

The benefits of neutering your rabbit are seen both for your rabbits and for you.

- **No risk of pregnancy**. Rabbits can have multiple litters per year, and pregnancy and birth both carry risks to both your rabbit and the kittens.
- **Improves socialisation.** Rabbits need the companionship of another bunny. Neutering both is really important, as male-female pairings generally work best socially.
- **Less risk of cancer.** Sadly, female rabbits are very likely to develop uterine (womb) cancers relatively early in life. They can also develop womb infections, or other cancers such as mammary (breast tissue) cancer. Neutering when young greatly reduces the chances of these occurring.
- **Better temper!** Neutered rabbits are less temperamental and generally easier to handle, which is especially important if you have children.
- **Better house training.** Neutered rabbits are much less likely to exhibit marking behaviours such as urine spraying.
- **Remove risk of false pregnancies.** Unneutered female rabbits often develop false pregnancies, which can cause very hormonal behaviour such as aggression towards their owners or other rabbits.

Rabbits are usually neutered around four to five months old. Males can be castrated as early as 10-12 weeks, although your vet may want to wait a little longer than this, especially in small rabbits.

Care should be taken with male rabbits once castrated – they can still be fertile for up to four weeks after castration as some sperm can remain in the genital tract! Make sure to separate them from unneutered females for at least a month after their operation.

Lastly, hermaphrodites are quite common in the bunny world (having both male and female sex organs). They still need neutering though.