

Should I neuter my dog?

There are lots of health, behavioural and social reasons why neutering your dog can be a good idea, but neutering may not be right for every dog. The benefits are:

For male dogs:

- Significantly reduces the chance of getting prostate disease and reduces the risk of some cancers.
- Can have a beneficial effect on some behaviours e.g. may be less likely to roam or display 'humping' behaviour
- However, it is less likely to improve aggressive behaviours and can sometimes make fear aggression worse. Talk to your vet first if your dog has behavioural concerns.

For female dogs:

- Stops bleeding during seasons
- Stops risk of pyometra (infected uterus) in later life, which can be fatal. Treatment for this usually includes spaying, which carries a greater risk when done in a poorly dog.
- Significantly reduces the likelihood of developing breast cancer
- Stops male dogs pestering your bitch when on walks etc.

Any downsides?

Studies have shown that neutered dogs are marginally more likely to get certain other illnesses but the risks are reduced if dogs are fully grown at the time of neutering, and most of these conditions are extremely rare, even in neutered dogs.

What's involved?

Your pet will require an anaesthetic and a surgical procedure to remove either the testicles, or ovaries and uterus (womb). Your dog will go home the same day, although exercise needs to be restricted for 10 days. Your dog will have pain relief medicine to take home and may need a lampshade collar to prevent licking of the wound.

When should I get my dog neutered?

Males can be castrated from around 5 months of age. However, it may be beneficial to allow dogs to reach maturity before neutering, particularly with larger breeds. Small dogs are mature at around 6 months; large and giant breeds often don't mature until 18+ months.

Females can also be neutered from around 5 months of age, before their first season. There is no clear evidence linking urinary incontinence with early neutering, however neutering before their second season significantly reduces the risk of breast cancer.

After surgery:

People sometimes worry that their pet will put on weight after neutering. Neutered animals might have slightly lower food requirements so you just need to feed them a little less. Neutered pedigree dogs can be shown according to Kennel Club rules.