

Desexing your dog

Why should I have my dog desexed?

Desexing should be considered if you are keeping any dog as a pet. Remember that Guide Dogs for the Blind, Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, and Dogs for the Disabled are routinely desexed.

What are the advantages of castrating my male dog?

- Reduces the risk of prostate cancer 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 male dogs.
- Removal of sexual urges, which usually decreases roaming behaviours.
- Reduction of certain types of aggression.

What are the advantages of speying in the female dog?

- Prevention of "heat" or oestrus.
- When in "heat", the female experiences an urge to escape in order to find a mate. This unwanted and dangerous behaviour is eliminated.
- It eliminates the possibility of false pregnancy following the "heat cycle".
- Prevention of uterine infection known as pyometra.
- The prevention of mammary (breast) cancer. Dogs that are speyed before the first "heat" have less than 0.5% chance of developing breast cancer.
- Elimination of the risk of uterine and ovarian cancer.

Is desexing performed for any other reason?

- Castration may be performed in male dogs to treat testicular tumours and some prostate gland conditions.
- To control hormonal (testosterone) dependent diseases such as anal adenomas.
- To assist with treatment of certain forms of aggression.
- Female dogs may be speyed to treat intractable false or phantom pregnancies or irregular or abnormal cycles due to ovarian cysts.
- To correct certain behavioural abnormalities.
- Treatment of uterine infection (pyometra) or cancer.
- Dystocia (difficult birthing) or post caesarean-section surgery.

I have been told that letting my female dog have one litter will quieten her down.

There is no scientific evidence that having puppies has any calming psychological effect. This is more myth than fact.

When should the operation be performed?

We recommend desexing at around five to six months of age.

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What happens when my dog comes in for the procedure?

Your dog will be examined by the vet while you are present and given a sedative injection so that they are not anxious. You will have the opportunity to ask the vet questions and discuss any other concerns.

What does the procedure involve?

Your dog will have a general anaesthetic. You will need to withhold food for 12 hours prior to surgery. However, your dog can have free access to water.

In male dogs, both of the testicles are removed through a small incision in front of the scrotum.

Speying a female dog involves removal of the uterus and both ovaries through a small incision made in the midline of the abdomen, just below the umbilicus.

The surgical incision in both male and female dogs is closed with several layers of sutures. We use intra-dermal dissolving sutures which mean that there are no stitches visible in the skin. This means that in almost all cases there is no need for an Elizabethan collar to be worn by your dog and no need for a second visit for suture removal.

Are there any post-operative precautions I should take?

Restriction of excessive activity is the main consideration for post-operative care. Most dogs can resume normal activity five to ten days after surgery. Until then, leash walks, no swimming, bathing, running or climbing stairs are advised.

When can my dog go home?

Both male and female dogs are sent home later on the same day of surgery.

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 guard dog. Obesity is probably the most commonly quoted disadvantage of neutering. Obesity is simply the result of overfeeding and not exercising enough. By regulating your dog's diet and energy intake, you can prevent obesity in all dogs.

Desexing does not cause a change in personality, or guarding instincts, intelligence, playfulness or affection.