

Should I have my rabbit neutered?

Female rabbits

Spaying your female rabbit can:

- Prevent unwanted pregnancies.
- Allow both sexes to be kept together.
- Prevent reproductive cancers in the uterus (womb) – sadly 80% of female rabbits will have a reproductive cancer by 4 years old. These cancers can spread to other organs and are often fatal. Removal of the womb is therefore recommended even in older rabbits once breeding is no longer desired.
- Help reduce hormone-related behaviours such as aggression towards owners and other rabbits, scent marking and mounting (although these may not stop completely).

Ideally, spaying is performed at around 5 months old. At this age, there should be minimal fat around the uterus, reducing the risk of surgical complications.

What does spaying involve?

- Prior to the procedure, your rabbit should be in good health, with a normal appetite and be passing plenty of normal stools.
- Your rabbit will be admitted to the hospital on the morning of the surgery and stay in for the day. She can eat up until the time of surgery, so we recommend bringing some food with her.
- Your rabbit will have an intravenous catheter placed (often in the ear) and the abdomen will be shaved in preparation for the surgery.
- The operation is performed under general anaesthetic and involves removal of the ovaries and uterus. The abdominal wall and skin are closed with dissolvable stitches and surgical glue.

Male rabbits

Castrating your male rabbit can:

- Prevent unwanted pregnancies.
- Allow both sexes to be kept together.
- Help reduce hormone-related behaviours such as aggression towards owners and other rabbits, scent marking and mounting (although these may not stop completely).
- Prevent testicular tumours.

Castration can be performed from around 4-5 months old, depending on the size of the testicles.

What does castration involve?

- Prior to the procedure, your rabbit should be in good health, with a normal appetite and be passing plenty of normal stools.
- Your rabbit will be admitted to the hospital on the morning of the surgery and stay in for the day. He can eat up until the time of surgery, so we recommend bringing some food with him.
- Your rabbit will have an intravenous catheter placed (often in the ear) and the skin around the scrotum will be shaved.
- Castration is performed under general anaesthetic and involves removal of both the testicles via incisions through the scrotum. The scrotal skin is closed with surgical glue.

****Remember male rabbits can still have viable sperm for up to 4 weeks after castration and need to be separated from entire female rabbits during time to prevent unwanted pregnancies. They should be separated but kept within sight, smell and sound of each other****

Post-surgery care

Your rabbit should be able to come home on the same day as the surgery, provided he/she is eating well and passing stools. We recommend keeping your rabbit indoors and continue monitoring them closely after the surgery, especially for the first 24 hours, as it is important they continue to eat and pass stool normally.

Pain-relief will be dispensed, usually a liquid that most rabbits find reasonably tasty, and this should be administered as directed for several days after the procedure.

The surgical site should be regularly checked for redness, heat, swelling, discharge or wound breakdown. If any of these signs are seen, we recommend a post-operative check sooner rather than later. If your rabbit is interfering with the wound, please let us know. An Elizabethan collar may be needed but we only use these when necessary as they can reduce the appetite and interfere with their ability to eat and drink.

Post-operative checks are offered and recommended so we can check in with you and your rabbit(s) after the surgery.

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