

## Neutering your Dog

### Dogs

Neutering dogs has many lifestyle and health benefits, but there is more potential for complication than with cats.

Anaesthetic drugs used in the procedure vary, and it is worthwhile to discuss with your vet which anaesthetic will be used as there are differing safety margins and recovery periods between products. Most procedures will involve premedication/sedation, an induction injection into a front leg where the hair will be clipped, (after which the dog is unconscious), followed by a gas delivered to your pet via a tube placed in the windpipe. This can sometimes cause a cough for a few days after the operation. Ask your vet about pain killers given during the operation.

### Bitches

Pros. Spaying will prevent the occurrence of a common life threatening uterine infection called Pyometra, and will dramatically reduce the risk of mammary cancer if performed at a young age. There will also normally be a cessation of seasons with no bleeding or behavioral changes and no unwanted pregnancies or "false pregnancies".

Cons. There may be temperament changes, some bitches becoming more docile, and some will have an increased tendency to gain weight. There is also an increased incidence of urine incontinence in later life, particularly if surgery is performed at a very young age. There is a small risk of haemorrhage and problems can occur within the skin wound. However, these are not common.

Ovariohysterectomy (removal of the ovaries and uterus) is performed though a cut along the tummy. When the patient is overweight or very big there is a greater tendency toward bleeding and bruising. This is a major surgery, even though it is performed routinely, but the incidence of complications is very low. Recovery can take several days and healing several weeks. It is typical that five to ten sutures would remain in the skin to be removed seven to ten days later.

Timing of the operation: Most vets will castrate bitches above nine months old. Many vets prefer to wait until after the first season, although this is not strictly necessary.

Midway between seasons is best and increasing age poses more risks.

Cost varies tremendously but typically would be in the range of £70 - £250

### Male Dogs

Pros. Castration reduces the risk of common prostate diseases which can cause pain and urinary problems later in life, and testicular tumors are prevented. Behavior is often less aggressive after the surgery, particularly towards other dogs. Over-amorous behavior is also much reduced, which results in less road traffic accidents and straying.

Cons. There may be temperament changes - quieter dogs with, occasionally, a tendency towards weight gain.

Castration (removal of the testicles) is normally performed though a single incision in front of the scrotum. Complications may include haemorrhage into the empty scrotum, and for this reason the scrotum is sometimes removed (ablation). Recovery normally take a day or so. It is typical that two or three sutures would remain in the skin to be removed seven to ten days later.

Where only one or no testicles at-all are present in the scrotum castration is strongly recommended to prevent problems in a "retained" testicle within the abdomen.

Timing of the operation: Most vets will castrate dogs above nine months old. Premature castration can affect the development of a masculine body and masculine behavior.

Cost varies tremendously but typically would be in the range of £50-£200.

## About the Author

Rupert Bowling is the owner of [Frontline Spot for Ivet](#). IVET consists of a team of dedicated professionals including a pharmacist, a pharmacologist, and two veterinary surgeons who oversee sales and provide the free, practical advice for your [pets](#) in the form of numerous on line information sheets.

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