



## **Neutering male cats**

### What are the advantages of neutering males?

The advantages include:

- Large reduction in roaming (so decreased risk of becoming lost, or being involved in a road accident)
- Reduction in fighting with other cats
- Reduced risk of contracting FIV or FeLV - these are fatal viruses contracted by mating and fighting
- Much reduced risk of spraying urine indoors
- Avoidance of typical 'tom cat' smell which is quite strong in adult male cats if they are not neutered

### What are the disadvantages of neutering males?

The disadvantages include:

- All anaesthetics and surgery carry some risk of complications

### So should I neuter my male cat?

The British Veterinary Association, Acorn House Veterinary Hospital and cat charities such as the Cats Protection League and RSPCA strongly recommend the neutering of all male cats unless intended for breeding.

### When should I neuter my male cat?

Male cats should be neutered before reaching puberty. We recommend neutering between 4 and 6 months of age.

### What does neutering involve?

Neutering males is also known as 'castration'. It involves removing both testicles.

Cats are given a pre-medication injection on arrival at the hospital. This makes them feel sleepy. They are then given a general anaesthetic and the fur over the scrotum is clipped away. Incisions are made in the skin over each testicle. The blood vessels to each testicle are identified and tied to prevent bleeding. The testicles can then be removed. The skin is not stitched back up because the wounds are tiny. All cats receive injections of pain relief at the time of surgery.

### What about the risks of anaesthesia?

Studies have shown that the risk of death under anaesthesia in healthy cats in the UK is approximately 1 in 900. This risk is higher than for people undergoing anaesthesia.

Anaesthetic risks are minimised by careful management and monitoring of the patient's temperature, heart rate, breathing rate, blood pressure, carbon dioxide levels and reflexes throughout the procedure. Every anaesthetised patient at Acorn House has an intravenous cannula placed before anaesthesia (small tube into the vein on a front leg) and a tube placed into the windpipe as soon as they are asleep. This means that the veterinary team can give intravenous fluids (a drip) and oxygen throughout the procedure, and are able to give medication straight into the bloodstream in case of any complications.

### What are the risks of castration surgery?

Specific surgical complications are uncommon but include:

- Bleeding. The testicles are supplied by blood vessels, which need to be tied off before the testicles can be removed. If the ties loosen after surgery, bleeding can occur. This is a problem that is mostly seen in the first 12 hours after surgery. If this complication happens, it will be necessary to go back and tie a new tie around that vessel.
- Interference with the wound. If cats lick at their wounds there is a risk of the wound opening up or becoming infected.

### How does Acorn House Veterinary Hospital minimise the risk for my cat?

- The senior veterinary and nursing teams at Acorn House have additional qualifications and experience in medicine, critical care and surgery and have developed anaesthetic and surgical protocols to ensure that every pet that is neutered at Acorn House will receive the same high standard of care.
- Cats that have been neutered are kept at the hospital until the end of the day. This ensures that they can be monitored for early signs of any problems, and are rested during this critical period of recovery.

### Aftercare

Cats usually go home the day of their operation. Check-ups are not usually scheduled, but are available free of charge if there are any concerns.

A buster collar is provided free of charge, to prevent cats from licking their wounds.

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