

What behaviour problems can castration help solve?

Castration does not cure all bad behaviour - however it may help manage behaviours that are influenced by testosterone, such as:

- **Mounting**
- **Urinating indoors (marking)**
- **Following other dogs when on walks**
- **Certain types of aggression, particularly between male dogs.**

Castration is unlikely to alter aggression towards people and in some circumstances may make things worse.

Will it change my dog's personality?

This is least likely to happen if your dog is castrated once over 3 years of age. If you are unsure or concerned, a medication is available that mimics castration. This can allow you to experience a temporary effect before making the final decision. Please consult your local branch for further information.

Castration has a huge number of benefits and we fully support it. We hope that you are now better able to make an informed decision regarding your dog. For any further advice please contact Behaviour Services on 07974 724463.

Drove Veterinary Hospital
252 Croft Road, Swindon, Wilts SN1 4RW
01793 522483 (24 hours)
www.drovevets.co.uk

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castrating
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The decision to castrate your dog is not one that can be taken lightly. Although relatively minor surgery, the effects cannot be reversed.

This leaflet aims to give you the latest information on castration, helping you to make an informed decision on whether this is right for your pet.

What is Castration and why is it performed?

Castration is removal of the testicles from the scrotum. Soon afterwards, levels of a hormone called Testosterone will fall significantly. Sperm will no longer be produced, but be careful, dogs can remain fertile for up to 6 weeks after the operation! Castration can prevent unwanted litters and testicular cancer, as well as reducing the risk of perianal tumours and certain prostatic diseases later in life. Castration can also help stop some unwanted behaviours, as discussed below.

The procedure

A free pre-operative consultation is booked with the Vet to discuss the procedure and check your dog is fit for an anaesthetic. On the day of the operation your dog will be admitted and given an injection of pain relief and a little sedation to help him feel at ease. Once under general anaesthetic,



the testicles will be removed. The skin is usually sutured with dissolvable material, so no stitches will need removing. A 'buster collar' may be required to prevent your dog licking the wound and causing an infection. Most dogs are able to go home the same afternoon but they must be rested to allow healing. Free post-operative checks are available after the operation to check everything is healing well and to advise when it is safe to begin exercising again.

Doesn't castration make dogs fat?

Dogs are prone to gaining weight after castration. However, if fed a suitable amount of a good quality diet, and given regular exercise, this can be prevented.

When should a dog be castrated?

Castration can be performed from six months of age; however at Drove we recommend delaying surgery until your dog is approximately three years old. By this time your dog will have finished growing and be emotionally mature.

Some dogs may be castrated earlier depending on individual circumstance,

for example if an entire bitch also lives in the household, or if a testicle has not descended fully. Other common reasons for earlier castration are persistent mounting, or a stipulation following adoption.

If you have more than one dog, neutering of either sex could alter their relationship. If you would like further information regarding which dog to neuter first, please contact one of our Behaviour Services team.

Why not castrate at puberty?

Many practices recommend that dogs are castrated from six months old. We also used to, and are still happy to, however we recommend you read this section prior to making your final decision.

If testosterone levels drop before a dog is emotionally mature, some behaviour problems may develop. This is particularly important in dogs that lack confidence. Confidence develops with emotional maturity, however early castration can interrupt this, and may increase the risk of fear, anxiety and even aggression. This includes problems such as noise phobias.

Conversely, there are dogs whose quality of life is improved considerably by castration – for instance a young dog that often gets into rows with male dogs in the park may enjoy his walks more without the constant competitive streak., or to help stop a dog feeling the need to mark all over the house.