



A castration is the process of removing the male testicles.

Why carry one out?

The colt will no longer be able to breed. This will reduce or prevent the colt's sexual behaviour, often making them less aggressive and easier to handle. After the procedure, your colt will be known as a "gelding". A castration may also need to be carried out if the colt suffers a severe testicular trauma, develops a testicular tumour, twisting of the spermatic cord and inguinal hernia. This surgery can be carried out at any age.

It is one of the most routine surgical procedures to be carried out but not without the risk of complication.

What are the surgical options?

There are two types of castration "open" or "closed".

An "Open" castration which is generally carried out "standing" but may require a general anaesthetic if necessary. It involves opening the vaginal tunic and the incision site is left open.

A "Closed" castration does not involve opening the *vaginal tunic*. It is a surgery carried out in a sterile theatre under general anaesthesia.

Advantages and disadvantages of each

"Open" Castration

Advantages

Can be carried out at your yard, in a field, or at the clinic.

Increased drainage of surgical site.

More affordable

Disadvantages

Longer recovery

The risk of post-operative complications such as but not limited to herniation, scrotal swelling, infection of wound and haemorrhage are increased.

Requires monitoring and aftercare of an open wound.

The colt must be well handled.

Should be carried out in spring or autumn when the paddocks are not muddy and flies are not about.

"Closed" Castration

Advantages

Reduced risk of post-surgical complications.

Faster recovery time

Disadvantages

Involves the risk of a general anaesthesia.

Must be done at the clinic

More expensive.

Suitability for Each Surgery

There are some circumstances where an "open"/standing castration may not be appropriate for your colt:

If your colt is under 12hh, it may not be possible for the vet to access the scrotum safely and accurately. We would then suggest a castration under a general anaesthetic but would leave the scrotum and *vaginal tunic* open, the same as if it were done standing. Blaircourt offers this type of castration at the same price as the standing in order to reduce the cost. We often call this a "knock down" castration.

If the colt is over 3 years old there is an increased risk of complication from an "open" castration. Most vets would recommend that a "closed" castration be carried out.

There is a condition called Cryptorchism whereby either one or both of the testicles have not descended into the scrotum. In both instances the undescended testicle/s may be within the inguinal canal or in the abdomen. Castration of a Cryptorchid must be done under general anaesthetic. The surgery carries further risk of complications, particularly if the abdomen has to be opened and the testicle/s removed via this route. The risks of this surgery must be discussed at length with one of our vets.



What to do before booking a castration

Check, where safe to do so, that the colt has both testicles descended. One of our vets can do this for you.

Please call the office, who can put you in touch with one of our vets, should you wish to discuss your options. The office will be happy to provide you with an estimated cost of each castration.