



Neutering rabbits

WHY?

- It stops them from breeding. Baby rabbits need a lot of attention and finding the right owners for each of them can be challenging. There are already many breeders and rabbits that need rehoming and therefore breeding them yourself is unnecessary.
- It reduces the risk of reproductive diseases such as uterine infections (pyometra) and uterine cancer (usually adenocarcinoma). This is especially important in females as up to 80% of entire females develop uterine cancer by 5 years of age.
- Neutered rabbits are calmer and easier to handle. They aren't as territorial (entire rabbits are more likely to spray the house with urine, chase and bite you...) and they also make better companions for other rabbits (entire rabbits are more likely to fight).
- Neutered rabbits are easier to litter train.



WHAT IS DONE?

Castration (males): both testicles are removed through small incisions in the scrotum or lower abdomen.

Spay (females): uterus and ovaries are removed through an abdominal incision. This is a bigger operation than castration, but if it has to be done at a later age due to reproductive disease, then the risks would be much higher.

WHEN?

Ideally when they are around 5 months old. Older animals will still benefit from neutering as it will still prevent reproductive illnesses but it might not be always as effective at changing unwanted behaviours if they have already become habit.



ON THE DAY OF THE OPERATION WE WILL

- Ask you to bring your rabbit in the morning. Rabbits SHOULD NEVER be starved overnight.
- Examine your rabbit to make sure it is in a good condition to have a general anaesthetic.
- Keep your rabbit in our “only small mammal” kennel area far from predators such as cats and dogs to reduce the stress and fear.
- Give your rabbit a pain killer before the procedure.
- Pre-oxygenate your rabbit prior and during the anaesthetic to improve the anaesthetic outcome.
- Intubate him/her to ensure airway access during the operation.
- Keep your rabbit warm during the procedure as hypothermia is one of the main risks in small mammals under GA. We might even keep him/her in our incubator after the operation.
- Send him/her home as soon as possible after the operation (usually around 3-5 o'clock) so he/she can go back to his/her normal life straight away. A nurse will discuss postoperative care when you come to pick him/her up.
- Check him/her 2 and 10 days after the operation to make sure he/she is having a smooth recovery.

Male rabbits will still be fertile and therefore able to mate for up to 6 weeks after the operation so we will advise you to keep him away from any entire females you might have.

MAIN POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Anaesthetic risk in rabbits is always slightly higher than in dogs and cats, but this risk can be substantially reduced by performing good anaesthetic procedures.
- Older animals or those with medical problems such as obesity and snuffles will be at higher risk so we recommend you to discuss it with one of our vets in order to choose the best option for your pet.
- After the operation you need to make sure your rabbit starts eating and going to the toilet as soon as possible as it is very important that the digestive system starts working again. If you experience problems with this, your rabbit might need extra medication to stimulate the gut. If in doubt it is always better to contact us and we will give you some advice or will ask you to bring your rabbit back to be examined.

