

Dog Neuter Surgery, From Start to Finish

What you need to know about this important procedure for male dogs.

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You recently brought home a wonderful male puppy, and now you need to bring him to a veterinarian for neuter surgery. What will happen during the procedure? How long will your puppy be gone? And most importantly, will he feel pain?

We've enlisted several animal welfare organizations including the Humane Society of the United States, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the American Veterinary Medical Association to answer all the questions you may have about this important procedure. For additional information, please talk to your veterinarian.

When should I neuter my dog? Between 4 and 6 months of age; however, veterinarians can alter an animal of any age. Some shelters and veterinarians perform juvenile or early-age neuter at 8 to 16 weeks of age.

What are the benefits of neutering my dog? Helps prevent unwanted litters. Decreases your dog's chance of developing testicular cancer, prostate disease and infections. Decreases your dog's chance of escaping while in search of a mate. Decreases the incidence of negative behaviors such as howling, inappropriate urination, territoriality and aggression.

What happens during neuter surgery? Your veterinarian sedates your dog and puts him under general anesthesia. The attending staff monitors his breathing and heart rate. The surgeon makes a small incision in the front (toward your dog's head) of the scrotum. Each testicle is removed and the blood supply and vas deferens (spermatic cord) are tied off. The veterinarian closes the incision with surgical glue or sutures.

Is the surgery painful? Your dog feels no pain while under general anesthesia, during and immediately following the procedure. Talk to your veterinarian about pain medication for post-operative discomfort.

Are there any risks associated with the surgery? Neuter surgery is not invasive; however, some risk accompanies any procedure that involves anesthesia. Your veterinarian takes many precautions to ensure your dog's safety during the procedure. Pre-anesthesia blood work assesses your dog's liver and kidney function, because these organs break down and remove anesthesia from the body after surgery.

Next Step: Is it Expensive?