



Dog Neutering

At Hitchin Vets we recommend neutering for small to medium breeds from 6 months of age. Larger breeds or nervous dogs benefit from delayed surgery.

Bitch Spays

If you would prefer to wait until after your dog has had a season to spay, we would recommend waiting 3 months from the first signs of the start of the season to have surgery performed. If your dog has not been spayed they are likely to come into 'heat' usually around every 6 months. At this point, we would recommend keeping her on a lead and away from male dogs during her walks and as they will be attracted to her for a period of 7-10 days.

For females, the procedure involves removing the ovaries, known as Ovariectomy (OVE). If, however, we find any womb abnormalities during surgery we will undertake a full Ovariohysterectomy (OVH), which may pose an increased risk with older dogs. Both methods of surgery ensure that your bitch will no longer be able to have puppies or come into season.

The Health Benefits of Spaying Your Dog

- Getting your bitch spayed can reduce the risk of her developing mammary gland tumours which is the most common type of malignant tumours in female dogs. Scientific evidence indicates that spaying your dog before her first season will provide the maximum protection benefit and this reduces with each subsequent season thereafter. Ovarian cancer can also be eliminated by having your pet spayed.
- Spaying can also reduce the likelihood of pyometra which is an infection of the womb, often resulting in emergency surgery.
- It can also reduce the risk of accidental pregnancies and potential of complications throughout pregnancies, which can be heightened in specific breeds.
- Spaying can also prevent your dog from developing pseudo pregnancy which is where your bitch will show signs of 'false pregnancy'. Signs can include milk production, nesting and other behavioural changes and enlargement of mammary glands. There may be a need to visit your vet for medication to resolve these signs if your bitch is struggling with the symptoms.

Male Castration

The surgery involves removing the dog testicles from the sac.

The health benefits of castrating your dog

- Eliminates testicular cancer which is the second most common tumour in males.
- Entire dogs can be prone to perineal hernias which require specialist surgery to correct.
- Prevention of impregnating un-neutered bitches.

Chemical Castration

Contrary to popular belief, castration can be detrimental to behavioural issues such as aggression and anxiety due to the removal of testosterone hormone after surgery. In these cases, we recommend delaying castration potentially indefinitely or trialling a chemical castration which mimics the effects of surgery without the permanent commitment of surgery. These are available in 6 month and 12 month durations.

Procedure information

We offer a free of charge pre-op check to all clients to discuss individual pet needs and when the most appropriate time would be to book in for surgery or alternative options.

This procedure is performed at our practice as a day surgery. Admission is arranged between 9am-9.20am on the morning of the procedure and a full discharge appointment will be given upon collection of your pet to discuss post-operative care. A smart collar or medical shirt can be provided to prevent licking of the wound, which can lead to infection.

You are also welcomed to one free of charge post-op check for us to examine the wound approximately 7-10 days after surgery.

We recommend monitoring your pets weight after neutering as both male and females can be prone to weight gain following this procedure. If an increase is observed, reducing their daily food intake can be discussed to combat this.