

The importance of neutering...

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It's more important than you think.

We all know the phrase 'breed like rabbits', but neutering your rabbit will do much more than prevent unwanted litters. A rabbit can breed every 4 weeks, but did you know that female rabbits don't have an oestrus cycle, they just come into heat as 'required'.

What does neutering involve?

The operation itself is relatively simple, obviously neutering male rabbits is a much less invasive operation than it is for the females, but they will both recover quickly. The vet will perform a pre-operative assessment to ensure the rabbit is fit and healthy and ready to be neutered. Most rabbits will return home the same evening, but occasionally some practices will keep the rabbit overnight to ensure it is comfortable and eating normally. Your rabbit may be discharged with a couple of day's pain relief to be given at home, and a post-operative check of the wound(s) may be required 4-5 days post op. It is important you go to a 'rabbit-savvy' veterinary practice, so that they have a good understanding of rabbit anaesthetics and post-operative care. Cost can vary, so call the practice to find out what they charge. We can provide you with contact details for 'rabbit savvy' practices.

Why should I neuter my rabbit?

Rabbits are very driven by their hormones, and occasionally the increased hormone levels at sexual maturity can cause a behavioural change. The rabbit can become anxious, frustrated and sometimes even aggressive. Male rabbits may try to hump you or your other pets, he may bite or chase and could also spray urine over you and your furniture to mark his territory. Neutering will calm these behaviours down but will not make him less affectionate. As female rabbits don't have distinct hormone cycles they often just have a behavioural switch seemingly overnight. She may build a nest or become highly aggressive and territorial. The incidence of Uterine Cancer in unsprayed females aged 4 years and over is 80%. Neutering from 5 months old will prevent this. Signs of Uterine Cancer include a sudden change in behaviour, an apparent cycle of hormonal behaviours and abdominal pain, among others.