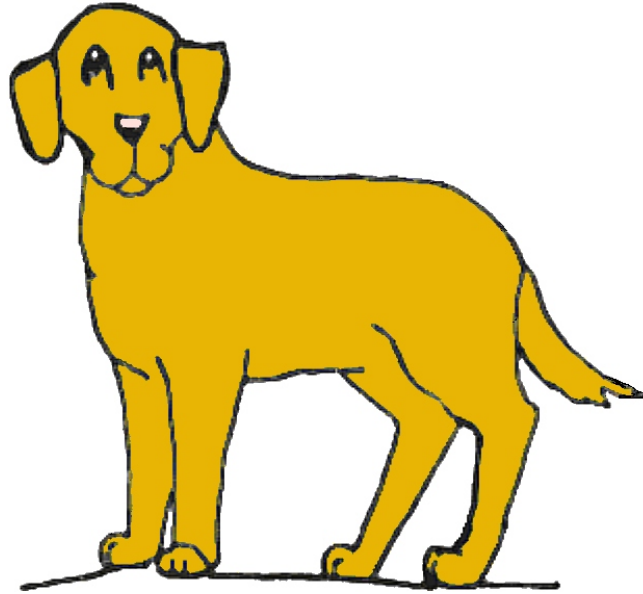


Neutering the Male Dog



WHAT ARE THE HEALTH BENEFITS TO THE DOG?

There are several health benefits to neutering. One of the most important concerns the prostate gland, which under the influence of testosterone will gradually enlarge over the course of the dog's life. In age, it is likely to become uncomfortable, possibly being large enough to interfere with defecation. The prostate under the influence of testosterone is also predisposed to infection which is almost impossible to clear up without neutering. Neutering causes the prostate to shrink into insignificance thus preventing both prostatitis as well as the uncomfortable benign hyperplasia (enlargement) that occurs with aging. It is often erroneously held that neutering prevents prostate cancer but this is not true.

Other health benefits of neutering include the prevention of certain types of hernias and tumors of the testicles and anus. Excessive preputial discharge is also reduced by neutering.

WHAT BEHAVIORAL CHANGES CAN BE EXPECTED AFTER NEUTER?

The only behavior changes that are observed after neutering relate to behaviors influenced by male hormones. Playfulness, friendliness, and socialization with humans are not changed. The behaviors that change are far less desirable:

interest in roaming:	eliminated in 90% of neutered dogs
aggressive behavior against other male dogs:	eliminated in 60% of neutered dogs
urine marking:	eliminated in 50% of neutered dogs
inappropriate mounting:	eliminated in 70% of neutered dogs

WHAT EXACTLY IS DONE SURGICALLY?

An incision is made generally just forward from the scrotum. The testicles are removed through this incision. The stalks are tied off and cut. Castration is achieved. If the testicles are not removed, the desirable benefits listed above cannot be realized. The skin incision may or may not have stitches.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT UPON DISCHARGE FROM THE HOSPITAL?

The scrotum is often swollen in the first few days after surgery, leading some people to wonder if the procedure was really performed. If the dog is immature at the time of neutering, the empty scrotum will flatten out as he grows. If he is mature at the time of neuter, the empty scrotum will remain as a flap of skin. Sometimes the incision is mildly bruised but this is not unduly sore for the dog and pain relief is almost never necessary post neuter. Most male dogs are eager to play by the day after surgery but, to keep the incision intact, it is best to restrict the dog from boistrous activity.

AT WHAT AGE CAN NEUTERING BE PERFORMED?

Neutering can be performed at any age over age 8 weeks. Dogs neutered before puberty (generally age 6 months) tend to grow a bit bigger than dogs neutered after puberty (testosterone is involved in causing bones to stop growing so without testosterone the bones stop growing later). Neutering can also be performed in the geriatric patient should the prostate gland become enlarged and the best medical decision be to shrink it. In this event, preanesthetic bloodwork and other diagnostics relevant to anesthetizing an older patient would be recommended.

The benefits of neutering (both health and behavioral) can still be obtained regardless of the age at which neutering is performed.

**Activity level and metabolism may change with neutering.
Diet changes should be made accordingly,
and on an individual basis.**



The City of Los Angeles charges \$100.00 to license an unneutered male dog, but only \$15.00 to license a neutered male dog. Breeding permits cost an additional \$100.00. Our city takes pet overpopulation very seriously, as should we all. In non-incorporated regions of Los Angeles County, neutering, microchipping, and rabies vaccination are legally required for dogs by age 4 months.

The City of Culver City requires **all** dogs be licensed (\$20.00), with no exceptions. To be licensed, dogs must be spayed or neutered, microchipped, and vaccinated against rabies.



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An expanded version of this handout can be found on our world wide web site:

http://www.marvistavet.com/html/canine_neuter.html