

DESEXING - ABOUT THE STERILISATION PROCEDURE

Deciding whether to have your pet desexed is a big decision, and it's a significant surgical procedure that requires a high level of care and skill. For most pets that live a healthy and event free life, desexing will be the most significant surgical procedure they will have. This article provides information on when you should have your pet desexed, what is involved in the procedure and some of the myths of desexing.

When can your pet be desexed?

Pets can be desexed at any age, including in their older years. Whilst most pets can be desexed as early as 6 weeks of age, we desex most pets between 5 and 6 months age. We also recommend not to desex a female while she is on heat, or in oestrus, unless there are medical or other reasons as the surgical procedure can be more complicated.

How soon after being on heat can your female dog/cat be desexed?

When an animal is on heat, there is increased blood supply to the uterus and ovaries. Animals can be desexed when there are in season or on heat, but we recommend that surgery be delayed until 3 to 4 weeks after the cycle finishes.



How long will your pet be in hospital?

In most cases your pet will be in hospital for just the day and can return home at the end of the day of the surgery.

What happens before the surgery?

- **The Day before admission** – bath your pet if possible to ensure he is nice and clean for the surgery;
- **Admission** – when you drop your pet off we will require at least 10 minutes of your time as we ask you some questions;
- **Care and Attention** – when you have left the nursing staff will settle your pet into their new environment with some soft bedding.

- **Blood Tests** – a blood test may be performed to assess vital organs and function. We will discuss this with you either before the day of surgery or at the time of admission. Sometimes a blood test is done before the day of surgery.
- **Pre-Anaesthetic Checkup** – the vet will perform a physical examination before surgery to make sure your pet is fit to receive an anaesthetic.
- **Pre-medication** – will be given to minimise stress and anxiety before the anaesthetic and surgery and to begin to provide analgesia.
- **Intravenous Catheter** – will be placed into a vein to provide access to your pet’s circulatory system. This enables intravenous medications and anaesthetics to be easily administered.
- **Pain Relief** – to ensure your pet’s comfort, we have a detailed pain relief protocol to ensure your pet receives the appropriate level of pain relief.
- **Surgical theatre and equipment** – prior to surgery all instruments are sterilised and our theatre provides a suitable environment for surgery.

What happens during the surgery?

- **Intubation** – anaesthesia is induced and an endotracheal tube is placed into the windpipe to deliver oxygen and gaseous anaesthetic to your pet.
- **Theatre** – your pet is placed on a heated surgical table in our operating theatre.
- **Monitoring Care** – respiratory monitors are used to indicate when a breath is taken, our nurses use stethoscopes to monitor the heartbeat, and pulse oximeters give a reading of oxygenation and heart rate.
- **Nursing Care** – a dedicated, trained nurse assists our veterinarian during the procedure.
- **Fluid Therapy** – intravenous fluids are administered during surgery to maintain blood pressure and organ function, and assist during recovery.
- **Procedure** – the veterinarian will make a small incision and remove the reproductive organs. Once this has been done, the vet will carefully suture the area. In most cases, sutures will be buried so that your pet will be unlikely to remove them in the days following surgery.

What happens after surgery?

- **Care and Recovery** – your pet will be moved to our main treatment area where a nurse will carefully monitor your pet’s recovery. It is very important your pet stays warm during the initial stages of recovery so we will use heating pads and keep them comfortable on a soft bed.
- **Your Role** – You will need to spend at least 10 minutes with us when you pick up your pet. We will provide you with an information sheet about keeping your pet comfortable and home care. It is very important you contact us if you have a concern after surgery, no matter how minor you think it is.
- **Post-Op Checkup** – you will be asked to schedule an appointment for a post-operative checkup about 10 days after the surgery. There is no additional cost for this post-operative visit.



Why do Veterinarians Recommend Desexing?

Unwanted Pregnancies

Veterinarians recommend desexing to prevent unwanted pregnancies in females and unwanted litters of puppies and kittens. It can be difficult to tell when a cat is on heat, and owners are often surprised to find their young cat pregnant. There are too many dogs and cats euthanased in animal shelters each year.



Undesirable Behaviour

Castration helps control male dominance aggression problems and also reduces their wandering instincts if a female dog in the neighbourhood is on heat. In female dogs, desexing stops their cycles, and the associated bleeding and attention from male dogs.

Tomcats have a tendency to roam and fight with other cats which can lead to other medical implications such as cat bite abscesses and feline AIDS. They are also much more likely to indulge in urine spraying on your favourite furniture! Female cats will continue to cycle every 1-6 weeks if they are not mated, and their behaviour can be a problem to owners.

The local park is a more harmonious place with desexed pets – they fight less which means pets can focus on socialising. This is important as often the local park is the only time our pets do get to socialise – a key to keeping dogs healthy.

Medical Reasons

Desexing eliminates or reduces the likelihood of a range of reproductive diseases – including breast cancer and prostate disease. Desexing may also be recommended in your pet to prevent hereditary diseases being passed on, or for treatment of some diseases involving the reproductive organs in both males and females.

Cheaper Council Registration Fees

Councils generally reward owners of desexed pets with lower pet registration fees.

SO YOU ARE A BIT CONCERNED YOU HAVE HEARD A FEW RUMOURS....

“Females should have a litter before being desexed.”

This is not necessary for your pets benefit. Desexing before a female pet's first heat cycle reduces the risk of mammary cancer almost to zero. Every season/heat a female has increases her chance of developing mammary cancer or pyometra.

“Desexing my pet will make him/her fat.”

By removing organs that produce hormones your pet’s metabolism may be slowed; overfeeding and under exercising your pet will make it fat.

“Animals become lazy after being desexed.”

The character of your pet will be generally unchanged. Young male dogs will be less inclined to mount objects and jump fences in search of a mate. However, they will still be happy to chase their favourite ball or participate in their favourite activity.

“Desexing a trained guard dog will reduce his/her ability to guard.”

Guarding results from instinctive territorial behaviour; it is not changed by the removal of testicles.

How to organise your pet’s desexing procedure.

Please telephone or email us to schedule a time for your pet’s procedure. We can provide information about the price of the procedure depending on the species and size of your pet. If your pet is female, we’ll also ask you specific questions about her heat or oestrus cycle.

