

Dog Surgery A-Z

Why Should I Neuter My New Puppy?

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During a "puppy visit," your [veterinarian](#) is likely to discuss [vaccinations](#), [heartworm prevention](#), [deworming](#) and [neutering](#). Are you aware of the main reasons to neuter a puppy?

Definition of "neuter"

Neutering or castration is the removal of both testicles. Occasionally, one or both testicles may be "retained" or "undescended" in a [cryptorchid dog](#). Testicles that stayed in the belly should be removed to prevent testicular torsion (a painful condition where a testicle twists on itself) or even testicular [cancer](#) (the risk of this condition is much higher when a testicle stays inside the belly). Neutering a puppy, which requires taking certain precautions while under [anesthesia](#), is considered safer than neutering an adult, because puppies tend to bounce back quicker. I recommend neutering puppies before 6 months of [age](#).

Why do many hesitate to neuter?

Some dog guardians, especially guys, have an issue with neutering their [dogs](#). This is a very touchy topic, which likely has to do with basic psychology: "Neutering my dog is like castrating me." This is an unfortunate misconception which has harmed many dogs. Neutering a dog does not turn him into a wimp. He will still have male characteristics, will pee like a male and behave like a male. The main difference is that he won't get in trouble by being attracted to females.

Neutering to help prevent aggression

Neutered dogs tend to be less [aggressive](#) and less defensive. This may be important if you have children and other pets. It also will make your life easier if you like to visit the [local dog park](#).

Neutering to help prevent roaming

Intact males are more likely to wander around, get hit by a car, end up lost or get into a fight. They can smell a female in heat miles away and sometimes will do anything to check her out—or worse. This can lead to countless undesirable encounters.

Neutering to help prevent population

problems

Neutering will prevent your dog from bringing more puppies into the world. In addition, unless your dog is a perfect representative of the [breed](#), there is a possibility of spreading genetic conditions such as [hip dysplasia](#), cardiac diseases and eye conditions.

Neutering to help prevent mounting

Mounting females—or the nice guests you invited for dinner—can lead to rather embarrassing situations. Prevention is easy: neuter your puppy, which virtually eliminates the awkward [behavior](#).

Neutering to help prevent prostate diseases

After a dog is neutered, the prostate shrinks, which almost eliminates the risk of several problems such as [infection](#) and cysts. The most common prostate disease is called "Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia," which can cause difficulty urinating. The treatment is simple: neutering the dog. Strangely enough, neutering seems to slightly increase the risk of prostate cancer. Fortunately, [tumors](#) are very rare in dogs, so the benefits of neutering greatly outweigh this small risk.

Neutering to help prevent perianal adenomas

Intact male dogs can have benign, but sometimes annoying, tumors around the anus called perianal adenomas. Affected dogs need [surgery](#) to remove the tumor(s), and castration to prevent a recurrence.

Neutering to prevent perineal hernias

Perineal hernias lead organs to slip (or "herniate") from the belly to an area along the rectum. The end result is a bulge on one or both sides of the anus. It can cause [constipation](#) and [pain](#). Surgery is required to repair the hernia and neuter the dog. The vast majority of dogs affected with a perineal hernia are intact males, therefore a hormone imbalance is suspected. But it is not the only reason since the [disease](#) is occasionally found in females (spayed or not) and in neutered males.

Neutering to prevent testicular cancer

The easiest way to completely eliminate the risk of testicular cancer or benign testicular tumors is to simply neuter a puppy.

As you can see, there are many reasons to neuter a puppy. Some have to do with his behavior, while most are related to his future health. Neutering a puppy is a smart and inexpensive way to avoid diseases and future veterinary expenses. Neutering provides a lifetime of benefits.

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Questions to ask your veterinarian

- When is the best time to neuter my puppy?
- What precautions are taken during anesthesia?
- What is the post-op care at home?

If you have any questions or concerns, you should always visit or call your veterinarian -- they are your best resource to ensure the health and well-being of your pets.