

# Elands Veterinary Clinic.

## CLIENT INFORMATION SHEET.

### NEUTERING



#### Elands Veterinary Clinic.

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**N**eutering your pet is important for a number of very good reasons. It will prevent unwanted litters of puppies and kittens, as well as reducing the incidence of antisocial behaviour and quite a number of common diseases and infections.

**Tom Cats.** Tom Cats can be castrated from 6 months of age onwards. Neutering should effectively control antisocial behaviour such as urine spraying, and reduce roaming and fighting. This in turn reduces the chances of road accidents and your cat is less likely to get abscesses from bite wounds or to pick up infectious diseases from other cats. Castration involves removing both testicles completely.

**Queens.** Queens can be spayed from 6 months of age onwards. They start coming into season at 6-8 months although this can be earlier in Spring/Autumn. They are in season for a few days every 3 weeks. When a cat is in season she starts "calling". She may roll around and adopt strange postures, become very affectionate or sometimes aggressive, and make unusual noises. If a cat starts calling she should be spayed midway between seasons. Spaying involves the removal of both ovaries and the uterus.

**Dogs.** Dogs may be castrated from 6 months of age onwards. Neutering reduces roaming and fighting and may be helpful for dominance and aggression problems. It also reduces the risk of some diseases later in life, such as prostate gland problems and anal adenomas (a form of cancer).

**Monorchids/Cryptorchids.** In some dogs and cats one or both testicles fails to descend properly into the scrotum at birth. This is thought to be largely a hereditary condition, and therefore affected animals should not be bred from (and cannot be shown). Retained testicles have a high risk of becoming cancerous, and because the testicles affected are not visible when they are retained in the abdomen, this is often not noticed until the condition is well advanced and may have spread to other organs. We therefore recommend that all monorchid and cryptorchid animals should be castrated.

**Bitches.** Bitches come into season from 6-9 months of age and the season lasts about 2-3 weeks. The first sign is a swelling of the vulva. This is followed by a bloody discharge - though all you may notice is the bitch licking herself excessively. This stage lasts 8-13 days on average (extremely variable) and the bitch will become attractive to male dogs. After this the discharge becomes clearer, the bitch will stand to be mated and she is truly in season. Again this stage is very variable (4-7 days but can be much longer). Some bitches can be mated and conceive whilst they are bleeding. Most bitches come into season every 6 months or so.

False pregnancies are quite common about 2 months after the bitch has been in season, and can lead to behavioral changes, nest making, vomiting/regurgitation of food and the production of milk. Bitches should not be spayed whilst they are in season or during a false pregnancy, therefore the best time for spaying is 3 months after a season. If you do not intend to breed from your bitch we recommend having her spayed

before her first season i.e. at about 6 months of age. Spaying before the first season reduces the risk of mammary tumours (cancers) later in life by 70-90%. This effect rapidly diminishes with each season. Spaying at any age prevents the life threatening condition of pyometra (womb infection). There is absolutely no "need" for a bitch to have a season or have a litter before she is spayed.

Neutering of any animal may slightly reduce its metabolic rate and therefore reduce its food requirement to maintain a normal body weight. Careful attention to diet will prevent excessive weight gain and is important to your pet's health. We are happy to advise on the optimum diet for your pet. Please feel free to ask a vet or veterinary nurse about your pet's diet. We also hold free "Nurse Clinics" on most afternoons where your pet's weight can be monitored and diets can be discussed with our nurses who are qualified nutritional advisors.

#### What is involved?

When you book your pet in for his/her operation with the receptionist, you will be asked not to feed him/her after 10.00pm the night before the operation, and to remove the water bowl first thing in the morning. This is important as a full stomach increases the risk of your pet being sick when coming round from the anaesthetic, which can be dangerous. You will be asked to bring your pet to the surgery at about 08.45am on the morning of the operation. You will be asked to read and sign a consent form. Please read this carefully and ask about anything you are not sure about. A nurse or vet may have discussed various anaesthetic options and preoperative blood samples with you already. Leaflets are available on this subject, please ask at reception. Although we have guide prices for all routine operations, the cost will vary with the size of the animal and the anaesthetic used. Please ask for an estimate for any or all of the options available.

Your pet will be examined by a Veterinary surgeon. If your pet has shown any signs of being unwell in the recent past please bring this to his/her attention. A nurse will then take your pet through to the hospital area where he/she will be weighed and given a pre-med injection. This reduces any anxiety and allows a smoother transition into and out of anaesthesia, as well as providing post operative pain relief. Your pet is then bedded down in our kennels until he/she is ready for the operation. A short acting anaesthetic is administered by injection into a vein in the leg which causes the animal to fall asleep within a few seconds. A tube is then placed into the animal's airway and connected to an anaesthetic machine which keeps him/her asleep on a gaseous anaesthetic for the duration of the operation. The anaesthetic is monitored throughout the operation by a trained nurse, and once the operation is over your pet is kept on oxygen until he/she starts to wake up, which takes only a few minutes. Your pet will be given a long acting antibiotic injection and is returned to kennels where he/she is monitored until fully conscious. Patients in for routine operations are usually allowed home the same day, at around 4-5.00pm. We like to check all operations after about 3 days, and stitches are removed after 10 days. There is no charge for these two post operative check-ups.