



# IS IT TIME TO CASTRATE?



Speak to our team  
today:  
**01584 841 080**

**Castration, surgical removal of both testicles, is a commonly performed routine surgical procedure that is usually quick and straightforward.**

**Castrations can be performed at any time of year, however they should ideally be carried out in either the spring or autumn months as this helps to avoid the flies associated with summer and wet/muddy conditions with winter. A colt/stallion can be castrated at any age, however, in older horses it can sometimes be preferable to perform castration under general anaesthesia which may require use of an operating theatre depending on the case. Both testicles must have descended into the scrotum for a colt to be castrated.**

## WHERE TO CASTRATE

Surgery can be performed under either standing sedation or general anaesthesia. This decision may be based, among other factors, on the size or age of the horse/pony and the temperament or previous handling experience of the horse. The operation can be carried out at the horse's yard providing you have adequate facilities. When castrated at home (using sedation and local anaesthetic) a competent, experienced handler is essential, however you can always request that one of our nurses to attend and help you. Clean, warm water and a clean environment will also be required. .

## THE PROCEDURE

There are two methods of performing a castration: **Standing castration under sedation:** Horses are heavily sedated and local anaesthetic is injected into the scrotum and testicles before surgery is performed. **Castration under general anaesthetic:** Castration under general anaesthetic is performed most commonly in small ponies, Shetlands, and always performed in donkeys. It is quicker and easier, for both our vets and patients, especially in poorly handled or very nervous animals. Most castrations are performed standing via an open surgical technique where the wounds are left fully open to drain. Occasionally a closed technique is performed where the vaginal tunic is opened to allow removal of the testicle and then closed again with sutures.

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Caring Professional  
**Severn Edge**  
EQUINE VETS



## AFTERCARE

Following your horse's castration you will need to monitor the wound for any excessive bleeding, swelling or tissue protruding from the wound. Drips of blood over the following 12 hours can be normal, but please contact the clinic if there is any more, particularly if it is dripping fast so that you cannot count the drops. A swelling the size of an orange is acceptable, the size of a melon is unacceptable and must be seen by a vet. If there is any tissue seen to be protruding from the wound please contact a vet immediately. It is not necessary to clean the castration site. The site should be checked for swelling twice daily for two weeks after surgery.

Turn out is recommended. For older horses walking exercise can be resumed immediately following the surgery.

**IF IN DOUBT ABOUT POST-CASTRATION COMPLICATIONS PLEASE CONTACT THE CLINIC TO SPEAK TO A VETERINARY SURGEON WHO WILL ADVISE YOU OF THE APPROPRIATE PLAN OF ACTION.**

## ARE THERE ANY RISKS?

- Infection acquired at the time of surgery, or from mud and dust contamination subsequently, is the most common post-operative complication. This emphasises the importance of hygiene wherever the horse is castrated
- Bleeding is a frequent complication of the open technique but is usually, but not always, self-limiting. If you notice excessive bleeding we would always encourage you to contact us
- Herniation of the abdominal contents through the wound, which is a rare complication, but more likely in donkeys. This risk is minimised by using the closed technique
- If the closed technique is your preference, the administration of any general anaesthetic does carry an element of risk

### CASTRATION PREPARATION CHECKLIST

Is your colt healthy?

Is he vaccinated against tetanus?

Are both testicles descended?

Do you understand the potential risks of castration surgery?

Are your facilities suitable?

Is sufficient help available?

Is there adequate clean, warm water?



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