


Is castration right for your dog?



THERE ARE MANY VALID REASONS WHY YOU MAY CONSIDER CASTRATING YOUR DOG. FOR EXAMPLE:

- To prevent unwanted litters / control breeding
- To reduce inappropriate urination
- To reduce sexual behaviour such as mounting
- To improve social behaviour such as aggression
- To reduce the risk or treat certain testosterone driven diseases

Please feel free to book an appointment if you would like to discuss these options further. 

However, castrating your dog is irreversible and is not without risk. Certain behaviours are not guaranteed to be improved by castration and some can even be worsened. For example, a dog that appears timid or aggressive may be, in fact, be socially anxious. The removal of testosterone may actually reduce confidence further leading to worsening of these signs. Other potential risk factors associated with castration include the risk of general anaesthetic, potential for weight gain and the increased risk of certain diseases such as joint disease, especially in large breed dogs.

IS THERE AN ALTERNATIVE TO SURGICAL CASTRATION?

If you are considering castration but are unsure if it is the correct decision for your dog, then medical castration is an excellent option. This is performed using an Suprelorin implant, very similar to a microchip. The implant can be placed, without anaesthetic, during a consultation. There are 2 sizes available, providing effective, reversible castration for 6 or 12 months (although the effects can last longer).

The benefits of a Suprelorin implant include:

- Fully reversible and can be used repeatedly (with long term use over several years, dogs may experience long term infertility). This gives you the chance to see the effects of castration without the irreversible commitment.
- Completely mimics surgical castration – testosterone is reduced to below functional levels therefore dogs become infertile during treatment and their behaviour will mimic that of a surgically castrated dog. This is particularly useful if you are considering castration due to behavioural issues such as aggression where there is a concern that the procedure may cause worsening of signs. It may also be appropriate to speak to a behaviourist before any treatment is given.
- Does not need to be removed
- No general anaesthetic risk

The cons of Suprelorin include:

- Lag phase – there is an 8 week period after implantation where your dog will still be fertile and show testosterone driven behaviour.
- Temporary increase in testosterone levels – in some dogs, during the first 2-4 weeks, their testosterone levels will significantly increase. This may lead to short lived worsening of some unwanted behaviours.
- Reversible – although a benefit in most cases, if you decide to use Suprelorin long term, your dog will need multiple implants over their lifetime. Surgical castration would be advisable.
- Cost – The implant is expensive, especially if used repeatedly.