

HERVEY BAY VETERINARY SURGERY

Owner Information Series

DESEXING YOUR PET

WHEN CAN YOUR PET BE DESEXED?

Pets can be desexed at any age including during their more mature years. Whilst pets can be desexed as early as 6 weeks of age, we desex most pets between 5 and 6 months of age. We also generally recommend, unless necessary for medical reasons, not to desex a female pet whilst they are in heat/season as the potential for increased bleeding is higher and may carry complications for your pet.

HOW SOON AFTER BEING ON HEAT/IN SEASON CAN YOUR BITCH OR QUEEN (FEMALE CAT) BE DESEXED?

When an animal is in season, there is an increased blood supply to both the uterus and the ovaries. Animals can be desexed whilst they are in season, but generally we try to wait at least 3 weeks after the start of their last oestrous cycle.

HOW LONG WILL YOUR PET BE IN HOSPITAL?

In most cases your pet will be required to stay with us for a day and can return home the same evening as the surgery.

WHAT HAPPENS BEFORE THE SURGERY?

- **Admission** – you will be checked in by the attending surgical nurse and he/she will examine your pet, discuss any questions you may have and confirm your pet's details. Please allow at least 15 minutes for this procedure.
- **Care and attention** – when you have left our nursing team will settle your pet into their new environment which includes warm fluffy bedding. Your pet will be given their preoperative medication which includes a sedative and narcotic pain relief.
- **Blood Tests** – blood testing is an integral part of surgical preparation, and while it is not a requirement for desexing a young patient, it is strongly recommended. We will discuss this either before surgery day or during admission with you (in some cases this blood test may be performed prior to admission).
- **Pre-anaesthetic check up** – our veterinarian will perform a physical examination (to check things such as teeth, ears, nails, lumps etc) and a TPR check (Temperature, Pulse, Respiratory) prior to commencing surgery.
- **Intravenous Catheter** – a catheter will be placed into a vein to provide access to your pet's circulatory system. This enables us to easily administer intravenous fluids, anaesthetic and pain relief.
- **Pain Relief** – To ensure your pet is as comfortable as possible we have a detailed pain relief protocol to ensure your pet receives the appropriate level of pain relief.
- **Instruments, gowns and surgical area** - Prior to surgery all instruments are sterilised prior to use and our theatre provides a sterile environment for your pet's surgery.

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WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE SURGERY?

- **Intubation** - Anaesthesia is induced and maintained with gas by placing a tube into your pet's windpipe.
- **Theatre** - your pet is placed on a heated surgical table in our sterile operating theatre
- **Patient monitoring** – our highly trained nursing staff will be monitoring your patient from start to finish. They will be monitoring your pet's temperature, respirations, heart rate, electrocardiogram (ECG) and blood pressure with our full spectrum surgical monitors. This allows them to make necessary adjustments to your pet's anaesthetic.
- **Nursing team** – a dedicated, trained nurse assists our veterinarian during your pet's procedure.
- **Fluid Therapy** – all of our surgical patients have intravenous fluid therapy to ensure that venous access is always available and to aid in the maintenance of good blood pressure during their procedure.
- **Procedure** – The surgeon will make a small incision and remove part of your pet's reproductive system. Once this has been done, they will carefully suture the area.

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 items such as heating pads and keep them comfortable.

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 caring for them at home. It is very important that you contact us if you have a concern, no matter how minor you think it is.

WHY DO VETERINARIANS RECOMMEND DESEXING?

- **Unwanted pregnancies**
Veterinarians recommend desexing to prevent unwanted pregnancies in females. This is especially important for cats, as it is not always possible to tell when she is 'on call'. In female dogs, desexing automatically stops their cycles and the associated bleeding and attention from male dogs.
- **Undesirable behaviour**
Castration helps to control male dominance aggression problems and also reduces their wandering instincts if a female dog in the neighbourhood is on heat.
Tomcats have a tendency to roam and fight with other cats which can lead to other medical implications such as cat bite abscesses and FIV (Feline immunodeficiency virus).
- **Significant medical reasons**
Spaying reduces the risk of mammary tumours (which can be life threatening - just like breast cancer in women). Tumours of the ovaries, uterus and cervix and pyometra, a gross infection of the uterus, can also be prevented.
Castration reduces the risk of prostatic disease, perianal tumours, and eliminates the risk of testicular cancers.

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Desexing may also be recommended in your pet to prevent hereditary diseases being passed on, or for treatment of some diseases such as prostatic hypertrophy or pyometra.

SO YOU ARE A BIT CONCERNED AND YOU HAVE HEARD A FEW RUMOURS... OR READ IT ON "THE GOOGLE"...

- **“Females should have a litter before being desexed.”**
This is not necessary for your pet’s benefit. Spaying a dog before her first heat will reduce the risk of mammary cancer to nearly zero. Every season/heat a female has, significantly increases her chance of developing mammary cancer.
- **“Desexing my pet will make him/her fat.”**
By removing organs that produce hormones your pet’s metabolism may be slowed, overfeeding your pet will make it fat.
- **“Animals become lazy after they are desexed.”**
There is generally no change in the character of your dog. Young males will be less inclined to mount objects and jump fences in search of a female 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.
- **“I don’t want to desex my dog because he will miss it”.**
Desexing animals at 6 months means they do not have a chance to develop mating behaviours. This is also “humanising” what your pet feels. Dogs are an important part of the family, but remember – they are not human!

HOW TO ORGANISE YOUR PET'S DESEXING PROCEDURE

Please contact us to schedule a time for your pet's procedure. This is best done by telephone so we can discuss any specific questions you may have. We can also provide information about price of the procedure as this depends 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.