

# Park Veterinary Centre

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## CASTRATION NOTES

A routine surgical procedure but any surgical intervention has associated risks.

### PRIOR TO ARRANGING

- Spring (March-May) or Autumn (Sept-Nov) is the ideal time (to avoid muddy conditions & flies)
- Optimum age 5-18 months or older, but could be castrated as weanlings (i.e. one month prior to weaning). Discussion with your veterinary surgeon may influence your decision regarding the age for castration
- Horse should:
  - i) have two descended testicles and be examined by a vet prior to castration visit
  - ii) be in good health
  - iii) preferably be covered for tetanus
  - iv) ideally be well handled

### PREPARATION PRIOR TO CASTRATION

- Feed as normal the night before but the quantity of overnight hay should be reduced by a third. Please read general anaesthetic notes if applicable (see website).
- No hard feed the morning of the op but a small amount of hay could be available.
- Drinking water should be available until 1hr prior to surgery.
- A suitable clean, dry, quiet area should be organised (stable, barn or paddock).
- A clean bucket with warm water.
- A clean patient (if possible!).
- One capable person available to hold the patient.

## METHODS

A) Sedation plus local anaesthetic: administered to a standing patient (op usually performed inside and may require a nearby power point for extra lighting if necessary).

B) Full general anaesthesia: horse will lay on his side (op usually performed outside)

The vet will chose the technique which enables the operation to be carried out in the safest & most efficient way taking into consideration the size, nature & age of the horse, facilities available & the owner's preference if any.

## POST OP

- The horse should be kept quiet on recovery.
- Careful observation of the patient is advised in the first 8-12 hours post op.
- Confinement for initial 8-12 hours with a walk-out in hand later the same day (or overnight turnout where appropriate). Exercise should then be encouraged – including lunging/turnout or forced exercise to help prevent swelling within the sheath (i.e. 5-10 minutes lunging once or twice daily).
- Rearing / play fighting with other youngsters should be discouraged.
- Hay can be offered post op & a small feed later in the day.
- Most castration sites are left open to encourage drainage.
- Antibiotics & adequate tetanus cover will be administered post op.
- Cleaning of op site is not advisable due to risk of dirt being pushed into the wounds, but gentle hosing is permitted.
- Straw or obvious debris visible from the wounds can be gently removed.
- 'Negasunt' powder can be puffed onto wounds once or twice daily for 5 days if necessary to prevent fly attraction.
- After castration the horse should still be kept separate from mares for at least 14 days.

## MONITORING POST OP

- Post op dripping of blood can be expected but should normally stop within 20-30 minutes.
- If bleeding persists or the amount increases, the vet should be called & the patient kept still, in a quiet environment.
- Sometimes the horse will require further surgery to control the bleeding.
- Occasional blood-tinged/ light straw-coloured fluid discharging from the wounds is normal and may occur for a few days post op.
- Swelling at the castration site can also be expected but if it doesn't resolve, becomes large/firm or more painful the vet should re-examine the horse. Sheath swelling is not uncommon but scrotal swelling should be reported to the practice.
- If the horse shows any malaise or hind-leg stiffness when walking, please contact the surgery.
- If any tissue appears to be hanging down from the wound (particularly within the first 24 hours after castration) then the vet should be contacted.

