

Castration

Castration is a surgical procedure performed under either sedation or general anaesthesia, to remove the testicles. If the colt is under 12.2hh the procedure is almost always carried out under general anaesthesia.

When?

We try to carry out all castrations in the spring and the autumn to avoid complications associated with flies. Normally castration is performed in the morning so that the horse or pony can be observed throughout the day.

Palpation

Before castration can occur, both testicles must be present within the scrotum. In addition, the vet will palpate the scrotum to ensure there is no herniation of abdominal contents.

Checklist

- Tetanus Vaccination
- Both Testicles Present
- Clean, dry stable
- Warm, clean water
- Well-handled colt

Tetanus

Tetanus is caused by the bacterium *Clostridium tetanii* which can be found anywhere in the environment. It enters through wounds; in this case the surgical incision. Unfortunately, most cases of tetanus results in the death of the horse, however, it can be easily prevented using vaccinations. If the colt is not covered for tetanus, the veterinary surgeon will begin vaccination protocol.

What is normal?

Some bleeding may occur for up to 12 hours. This is usually in the form of gentle dripping. The scrotum and sheath will swell and may become several times their normal size, and this swelling may last for up to 7 days. There are two wounds which are not sutured and may discharge some serum for up to 48 hours. The wounds may take up to 2 weeks to heal.

After Care

During the operation your horse has received antibiotics and tetanus antitoxin against potential infection.

In the summer months flies may be a particular problem and are attracted to open wounds. Fly repellent should be applied to the flanks and hind quarters of the horse but not directly up into the wound.

Turnout should happen after the initial 24 hours of stabling or the horse will require intensive hand walking to keep any scrotal swelling down that may occur. Initially when the horse is turned out its gait may be slightly stiff but this will ease off with more exercise.

What to look out for...

Continuous bleeding in an unbroken stream.
Any tissue or material hanging from the wound.
Any swelling under the tail and between the buttocks.
Lameness or stiffness lasting more than 48 hours.

**IF YOU SUSPECT ANY OF THESE COMPLICATIONS,
PLEASE CONTACT THE HOSPITAL IMMEDIATELY
ON 01555 660000**

