

Castration

Having a male dog neutered, can be said by some people as being a universal means of problem solving. Nothing could be further from the truth. There are a number of reasons for castrating a male dog with some of the more common reasons looked at here. The biggest single obvious reason for neutering is to reduce the number of homeless or unwanted dogs in this country. Every year thousands of unwanted dogs are needlessly euthanased because they cannot be found suitable homes and another unwanted litter of puppies will only add to these numbers.

Early castration can assist in preventing the development of problems and indeed some canine medical conditions. Every veterinary surgeon has different ideas about castrating and what age is most suitable, but as a general rule a male dog can be castrated once their testicles are mature and have dropped into the scrotum, making the procedure straightforward. The procedure of castration is a painless, clean and routine operation, with most dogs fit for gentle exercise with a day or two.

Situations that can be improved by castration include roaming and consistent escaping to seek mates. The remarkable sense of smell that dog's have developed allows them to detect a bitch in season from a considerable distance. With a natural urge to mate, entire male dogs can become agitated and frustrated easily. Conflicts can also occur between entire males when competing for territory, bitches or other resources. Marking is a form of identifying territory, with entire dogs cocking their legs to their scent as high and as noticeable as possible on any structure that they find. This can sometimes include furniture in the home and maybe a situation when castration can assist as part of a behaviour modification programme. Aggression displayed towards other dogs or people can be promoted with the body's production of the male hormone testosterone, which is also responsible for providing an animal with an element of confidence. This production of testosterone is removed following castration. A side effect of castration can be an increased appetite, therefore adjustments and monitoring of the dog's diet is sensible.

Therefore knowing all these elements of castration, should problems related to fear be experienced then, professional advice should be sought before neutering as castration could increase the likelihood of this behaviour. Similarly, any dog displaying guarding behaviour of food should be treated with similar caution as a situation like this could increase in frequency or severity following castration.

Behaviour problems are usually a combination of learned behaviour and instinct therefore castration in conjunction with training is both usually necessary to resolve individual issues. See your vet for advice.