

### What is desexing?

Surgical desexing involves removal of part of a pet's reproductive system whilst under a general anaesthetic. In females desexing also known as spaying or an ovarian hysterectomy involves removing the ovaries and uterus. In males desexing also known as castration or neutering involves the removal of both testicles.

### Why your pet needs to be desexed

Around Australia millions of dogs and cats are destroyed at animal shelters every year. Veterinarians recommend desexing to prevent unwanted pregnancies in females and to stop this unnecessary destruction. Desexing is especially important for cats, as it is not always possible to tell when she is in season. In female dogs, desexing automatically stops their cycles and the associated bleeding and attention from male dogs that result in pregnancy. Castration in male pets helps to control several behavioural related issues. In dogs it can prevent aggression problems and wandering instincts which are characteristic of 'pack' animals that need to seek other dogs company. It is in fact kinder to desex your male pet to stop the 'hormonal' need to wander and find a mate. In male cats it can reduce the tendency to roam and fight which often leads to cat bite abscesses and related complications. In both cats and dogs, male urine odour can be particularly strong and pungent. Desexing usually prevents this odour plus in most cases desexing will reduce or eliminate spraying in cats.

### There are also significant medical reasons for desexing your pet:

- Desexing reduces the risk of hereditary diseases being passed on.
- Spaying reduces the risk of mammary tumours, tumours of the ovaries, uterus and cervix, and a gross infection of the uterine tract.
- Castration reduces the risk of prostatic disease and perianal tumours and eliminates the risk of testicular cancer.

### At what age should your pet be desexed?

Desexing can be performed from the age of four months onwards. The benefits of desexing are more effective if carried out at a young age however it can be performed at any age. Surgery is often shorter and recovery is quicker with less post-operative discomfort for younger pets.

### What you should know about surgery at one of our nominated Vets:

The goal of any surgery at our vets is to minimize anxiety to your pet, perform a safe procedure and eliminate pain during and after surgery. With this in mind, here are a few things you should know about surgery at Greencross Vets.

#### Your pet's pre-anaesthetic test

As in human medicine, the anaesthetics available for anaesthetising companion pets are extremely safe. As a result, risk is greatly minimised when a "healthy" pet is placed under anaesthetic. However if your pet is not "healthy", complications can occur both during and after an anaesthetic procedure. To fully assess your pet's overall health, it is necessary to perform a blood test prior to anaesthesia. This is a laboratory test that examines your pet's major organs such as the ability of the liver and kidney to rid the body of drugs and medications. It also identifies abnormalities in blood cells such as the ability to carry oxygen, fight infection and clot. Our pet healthcare team will discuss pre-anaesthetic testing with you further.

#### Fluid therapy

Intravenous fluids will help your pet's liver and kidneys flush out anaesthetic drugs and maintain better blood pressure during surgery. This means a safer anaesthetic and faster recovery for your pet.

## **Pain relief**

Pain relief is provided to all pets. We also provide take home medication so your pet can continue to recover comfortably on their return home.

## **Gas anaesthesia**

Our Vets use gas anaesthesia, the safest form of anaesthetic for pets. We also use specialised equipment to monitor the administration of anaesthetic during surgery.

Sterile surgery and dedicated theatre

Just as in human surgery, the vets surgical team are fully gowned during surgery. Instruments are sterilised in an autoclave and we have a dedicated surgical theatre.

## **Monitoring**

The Greencross dedicated patient care nursing staff will monitor your pet before, during and after surgery and will ensure your pet is kept in a comfortable and warm environment.

## **Your day**

We are often asked whether or not a pet parent should stay at home to care for a pet after surgery, particularly for routine surgery such as desexing. Generally pets make a speedy recovery after routine surgery. For this reason staying at home with them is not necessary as long as they have somewhere warm and comfortable to stay. However, if you are considering making special plans to be with your pet, we suggest you take the day off after surgery rather than the day of surgery.

## **Your pet's day at the vet**

Once your pet has been admitted to our ward, we will perform a health check up and administer a sedative, this will help your pet to relax. After surgery your pet will recover on a heating pad, accompanied by hygienic, dry and fluffy bedding. Your pet will be treated as if they are our own. Not only will our veterinary nurse continue to monitor recovery they will also give your pet the attention (and cuddles of course) they deserve.

## ***FAQ's - The Myths of desexing***

'Females should have a litter before being desexed.' For your pet's health this is not true, spaying a dog before her first heat will greatly reduce the risk of mammary cancer.

'Desexing will make my pet fat.' Desexing is done at an age when rapid puppy growth is decreasing and diet control is necessary. Overfeeding and lack of exercise will make your pet fat not desexing.

'Desexing a trained guard dog will reduce his/her ability to guard.' Guarding results from instinctive territorial behaviour. This does not change when a dog is desexed, in fact they are less likely to become aggressive as they get older.

'Pets become lazy after they are desexed'. There are generally no changes in the character of pets after desexing. Young male dogs however will be less inclined to mount objects and jump fences in search of a mate.