

Instructions for post-operative care of routine horse castrations:

Your horse has undergone a surgical operation and he will need careful attention to ensure that he recovers quickly without any complications.

- You will notice that he has two slits, which are intentionally left open to allow for the natural drainage of blood and serum - if any other fluid or tissue is present contact us for advice. These slits will gradually close up after 7 - 10 days. Unless they are kept clean he may develop secondary infection.
- The wounds may still be dripping blood, this is quite normal, and if the drip rate is less than 60 per minute it should not cause any problem. There may be an intermittent discharge for up to 3 days.
- We advise keeping the horse stabled for 24-hours following the castration operation. Please note that he may be sleepy following the anaesthetic or sedation and should be stabled on clean dust free bedding for the first night. He should be given the normal amount of water and hay and half his normal hard feed.
- The day after castration he should resume normal demeanour and appetite. It usually requires 3 - 4 weeks for testosterone levels to fall so a general quietening of a robust colt cannot be expected prior to this. He should not be turned out with mares until at least 6 weeks after his operation.

From the day after Castration:

- Bathe off any discharge from the scrotum, do not infuse anything into the incisions, this also helps to massage the area. If possible the day after castration gently 'milk' the scrotum towards the slits (like squeezing a tube of toothpaste) to remove any retained blood clots; it is not possible to do this safely in all colts.
- The scrotum may swell, this should be reduced by exercise, ie walking out 3 - 4 times daily for 20 minutes if necessary from day 3, or turning out and ensuring that the gelding takes some vigorous exercise, taking care that the wounds do not get muddy or troubled by flies. The general rule is swelling of the prepuce to the size of an orange is acceptable; if to the size of a grapefruit increase the exercise. Vigorous exercise is often necessary to control the swelling in horses older than 3 years old.
- The maximum swelling is usually reached by day 5 - 7 and can continue for up to three weeks. Excessive swelling or purulent discharge can indicate a complication such as an infection, scirrhus cord or hernia so please contact us if in doubt about this especially if the scrotum becomes more swollen on one side than the other.
- A tail bandage will have been applied before the operation and should be left on for 5 days, if possible, to reduce the risk of secondary infection from the tail coming into contact with the castration wound. Should the bandage slip, or fall off, a similar type of plastic bandage (that will not shrink) should be gently applied or the tail washed and platted so that it cannot contaminate the incisions.

If you require any further guidance please telephone the vet that carried out the operation or contact the hospital during office hours unless you consider you require advice or treatment in the event of an emergency. The 24-hour number is **01329 833112**.

Contact us if any of the following occur:-

- Loss of appetite.
- Blood loss from wound after the second day, (there may be some red tinged discharge).
- Excessive swelling of prepuce, which does not reduce with vigorous exercise.
- Excessive discharge, particularly if thick and/or yellow in colour, this may indicate a secondary infection.