

Post Operative Care after Castration

Following surgical castration (open technique) two open surgical incisions will usually be present in the scrotum. These are not usually stitched as this can lead to excessive swelling of the area and predispose to infection. A clean environment should be provided in the week following castration. A grassy paddock with no mud or dust is probably ideal as the horse/pony will move around whilst grazing, disperse any swelling at the surgical site and minimize discomfort. Alternatively, the horse/pony may be stabled. A deep clean straw bed is ideal. Shavings, paper and hemp tend to stick to the wound if the animal lies down. Stabled horses and ponies, which have been castrated, should be walked out in hand or lunged for 10 minutes daily to limit scrotal swelling and encourage any drainage from the wounds. The inside of the hind legs and the tail should be cleaned of any blood or discharge but the scrotum itself should be left alone.

Problems can sometimes occur after any form of surgery and castration, especially when carried out under field conditions, is no exception. It is therefore prudent to check for these complications twice daily in the week following castration and to notify the vet if they occur.

- 1) Haemorrhage. Some bleeding is inevitable following castration but should be limited to the occasional drip. If rapid dripping of blood occurs count the drips per minute and contact the practice.
- 2) Anything protruding from incisions from the scrotal wounds except occasionally a blood clot. If anything else protrudes from the wounds contact the practice.
- 3) Swelling. Some swelling is normal following castration. The scrotum may swell to a size similar to that before the testes were removed. This swelling will usually travel forward onto the sheath within a few days and may take a week or two to disperse from this site. If excessive swelling develops or if the horse or pony looks to be uncomfortable when walking or has a wide based stance behind then call the practice.
- 4) Demeanour. Your gelding should appear normal once the sedative or anaesthetic has worn off. If the horse or pony looks dull or goes off feed then call the practice.