Nimble Veterinary Hospital
West Ryde · (02) 9129 5551

Desexing your rabbit: owner guide

Timing, preparation and aftercare for rabbits.

KEY POINTS

- We aim to desex rabbits once they **weigh over 1 kg** and, in males, once the testicles have descended. Rabbits aren't part of the NSW Pet Registry.
- **Do not fast your rabbit.** Their gut needs to keep moving, so let them eat and drink as normal until drop-off.
- After surgery, watch eating and droppings closely. **No droppings for 12 hours, a bloated belly or refusing food is an emergency.**

Getting ready

- **No fasting.** Let your rabbit eat and drink as normal.
- Bring their usual hay, pellets and favourite greens so they're tempted to eat as soon as they wake up.
- Use a secure carrier lined with a towel and keep them warm; rabbits lose body heat quickly under anaesthetic.
- Tell us if your rabbit lives with a bonded companion.
- Prepare a clean, dry, quiet enclosure with soft towels or paper (not loose hay or sawdust, which can contaminate the wound) for the first few days.

What happens on the day

- **Admission:** check-in, consent form, questions about the procedure and costs.
- **Pre-anaesthetic check:** a physical exam, and possibly intravenous fluids depending on age and health.
- **Recommended blood test:** an in-house pre-surgical blood test checks how organs such as the kidneys and liver are working and can pick up hidden problems. It's an extra cost; we're happy to go through it with you.
- **Pain relief and sedation**, then **surgery** under general anaesthetic with monitoring throughout.
- **Recovery** in a warm, monitored area, then home, usually the same afternoon. A nurse will go through the discharge instructions and medications and book any recheck.

Aftercare at a glance

- Your rabbit should be nibbling hay or greens within hours of getting home and passing droppings within about 12 hours. Eating and droppings are the key signs of a healthy gut.
- Keep them warm and quiet in a clean, dry enclosure.
- Check the wound daily and discourage chewing or scratching; let us know if you see it.
- Male rabbits can stay fertile for around 4 to 6 weeks after castration, so keep them away from females.
- Reintroduce bonded companions under supervision, and separate them again if there's rough behaviour or wound interference.
- Give only the pain relief we prescribe. Recheck, and stitch removal if needed, at about 10 to 14 days.

CALL US STRAIGHT AWAY IF YOU NOTICE

- **No droppings for 12 hours, a bloated belly, or refusing to eat: treat as an emergency**
- Bleeding or dripping from the wound, an opening wound, or a growing swelling
- Pale gums, laboured breathing, collapse or marked weakness
- Cold, very quiet or hunched rabbit

Before surgery checklist

- [ ] Rabbit weighs over 1 kg (and testicles descended if male)
- [ ] Rabbit NOT fasted: eating and drinking normally up to drop-off
- [ ] Hay, pellets and favourite greens packed
- [ ] Secure carrier lined with a towel; warm for the trip
- [ ] Told the team about any bonded companion, medications or illness
- [ ] Clean, dry, quiet enclosure ready with soft towels or paper
- [ ] Booked the recheck/discharge appointment

Aftercare checklist (next 10 to 14 days)

- [ ] Eating hay or greens within hours of getting home
- [ ] Droppings seen within about 12 hours, and monitored daily
- [ ] Kept warm, quiet, and in a clean, dry enclosure
- [ ] Wound checked daily; no chewing or scratching
- [ ] Pain relief given as prescribed
- [ ] Males kept away from females for 4 to 6 weeks
- [ ] Bonded companion reintroduced under supervision
- [ ] Recheck attended and stitches removed if needed (10 to 14 days)

Contact us

Nimble Vets

Nimble Veterinary Hospital
75 Ryedale Road, West Ryde NSW 2114
Phone: **(02) 9129 5551**
nimblevets.com.au

sash+ Small Animal Specialist Hospital

After hours emergencies
Our closest 24-hour hospital:
SASH Sydney (North Ryde)
1 Richardson Place, North Ryde NSW 2113
Phone: **(02) 9889 0289**
Open 24 hours, 7 days

SASH is a separate, independent hospital and is not affiliated with Nimble Veterinary Hospital. We've listed it as the closest 24-hour emergency hospital available to our patients.

General information only, not a substitute for veterinary advice. Please follow any specific instructions given to you by our team. Full guide: nimblevets.com.au/pet-health/desexing-dogs-cats-rabbits