



Royal Animal Hospital – Neutering Male Dogs

A male dog that remains intact experiences a huge increase in testosterone in adolescence. At several months of age, the male's testosterone level can be several times that of an adult male! This gives a real jump-start to hormone-related behaviors, including urine marking in your house, aggression toward other male dogs, territorial aggression, and escape-oriented behavior in order to roam.

Some male dogs, especially tiny terriers and hounds, may be impossible to houstrain if you wait too long to neuter them. With all dogs, be guided by your veterinarian's opinion as to the best time for spay/neuter. Six months to one year of age is usually about the right time.



For best behavioral results, it's best not to wait past a year of age to neuter males. Once a hormone-triggered behavior has continued long enough, you can be dealing with a firmly entrenched habit that will not fade even after neutering. Frequently, neutering helps with behavior problems, even if done much later, so don't give up on it just because you've missed the optimum time.

Intact male dogs tend to have more difficulty concentrating on tasks and to show erratic behavior in the vicinity of a female dog in heat. Intact males may not be able to eat or sleep when a female dog in heat is in the same house! Jumping fences to go after a female down the street is common, even in dogs who have never roamed before.

Your 1-year-old or 2-year-old intact male dog may be acting like a neutered male in terms of being easy to live with, but if you leave even an easy-going fellow intact to the age of 3 years, you'll have a greater risk of seeing undesirable behaviors. The age of 3 is commonest for intact male dog to be involved with a terrible tragedy, such as attacking children. Obviously, many intact male dogs are not aggressive child-killers but the risk is increased, and parents need to know this, as does everyone who has a large-breed male dog. If you don't have an important reason for breeding the dog, and the right facilities to keep the dog from harming anyone, why live with this increased risk?

Dogs are much more the victims of their own instincts than humans, less able to override impulses. If you want to take your dog out and about, whether for family outings, runs at the dog park, or pursuit of dog sports such as agility, the dog will function better if neutered.