



## **Post-operative castration care**

### **What should I do?**

After the procedure is finished, your vet will wait until they are happy your horse is waking up from the sedation. Your horse may still be drowsy for another 30-60 minutes. In this time, please keep him quietly in his stable or the yard where the castration has been performed. No hay or feed should be offered until he is awake from the sedation (approximately 1 hour).

The wounds in the scrotum where the testicles have been removed are left open (not stitched) to allow drainage of blood and fluid. Dripping occurs for about an hour after castration and you may find some small blood clots will also fall out from the wounds. Dripping should be slow (i.e. you should be able to count the drops), however if there is a slow steady stream of blood which continues for more than 5 minutes please telephone the practice for advice. Sometimes when the horse moves, movement of the scrotum will cause any blood collecting with gravity in the scrotum to empty all at once and you will get a brief flow of blood, but this should be less than a few minutes.

The horse should be kept in a small area (stable or enclosed yard) overnight to prevent excessive movement and allow further blood clotting to ensue. The following morning the horse should be turned out in a clean and dry area to exercise freely as movement is essential to prevent excessive swelling and encourage drainage.

Medication instructions should be closely followed and if you are struggling to administer any medication please telephone the practice as an alternative may be available.

### **What should I look out for?**

- Excessive bleeding- this usually occurs in the immediate hours following surgery.
- Any tissue hanging out of the wounds- this can happen in the first couple of days. Many times it is just clots, but if you suspect tissue is hanging out please phone the practice. If you suspect gut is hanging out phone the practice immediately as this is a serious, but very rare complication of castration.
- Excessive swelling- some minor swelling is to be expected around the sheath area for the first few days after surgery. If the swelling is bigger than the size of a grapefruit please phone us for advice. Any swelling tracking towards the tail base or forwards on the belly should also be reported.
- Signs of infection- this is usually evident several days after surgery. Signs to look out for include the horse being out of sorts or off colour, stiffness, a high temperature (over 38.5°C or 101.5°F) or inappetence (off food).

### **What should I do if I am worried?**

Please do not hesitate to phone and ask us for advice! We would always rather check a horse than for you to worry something is wrong.