

Castration



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Your colt/ stallion just has been castrated (gelded) by your veterinarian. He is now a gelding. In this procedure, both testicles and epididymus (sometimes called the "squealer") are removed through two vertical incisions. Emasculators crush the cords, muscles and blood vessels and the incisions are left open for drainage. The incisions are not sutured because the horse's body responds to the procedure by secreting serum that needs to drain. This drainage will be clear yellow or a clear red tinged fluid. Some swelling will occur after the procedure, usually descending into the sheath due to gravity. This is normal and may last a few days.

All horses should be current on their tetanus vaccine (< 1 year). Depending on age of the horse and doctor's discretion, some horses will be given an antibiotic injection at time of the procedure.

The day of the procedure, it is best to keep your horse confined to keep the blood clots intact. Starting the day after castration, you need to exercise your new gelding once or twice a day for 15-30 minutes for 7-10 days. This exercise needs to be an active walk or trot to aid drainage of the incisions which keeps the swelling to a minimum. Or, if your gelding self-exercises in the pasture (not just standing around), you can turn him out for exercise starting the day after castration. If the scrotum or sheath swells too much (more than a grapefruit), the most common reason is not enough exercise!

Your new gelding should act normally (eat, drink) after this procedure. Although this is considered a "routine" surgery, complications sometimes occur.

Possible complications of this procedure include:

Swelling and incisions closing too quickly (<10%)

Local infection at the site of surgery (<5%)

Excessive bleeding (steady stream instead of dripping (<1 %)

Eventration of intestines through the inguinal ring (<. 01%)

If your colt should go off feed, run a fever, or if the swelling does not go down with exercise, he may have developed a local infection. If this happens, please contact your veterinarian. Your veterinarian will examine the incision site to check for drainage and may prescribe antibiotics for your horse.

After the castration, some bleeding will occur because the incisions are not sutured and the skin and blood vessels may still bleed. Slow dripping of blood up to an hour after castration is normal. If this should change to fast dripping or a stream of blood, contact your veterinarian right away. A blood clot from one of the cords may have come loose.

The 3rd possible complication is intestinal eventration. The testicular cords descend from the abdomen through the inguinal rings into the scrotum. When the testicles are removed, there is a remote chance that a piece of small intestine could drop through these rings. This is very rare but life threatening. Fortunately, I have only experienced this complication once in the last 24 years. If you should see anything abnormal hanging through the incision, please contact your veterinarian immediately. Keep the horse calm until the vet arrives... offering food can divert the horse's attention and keep them still.

After castration, your new gelding could possibly get a mare pregnant for up to 3 days due to residual sperm in the reproductive system. This sperm will be urinated out by 3 days. As for "stallion" behavior, it usually resides within a couple weeks for a young, unbred colt. If you have an older stallion who has bred many mares, it could take months for the hormones to decrease and the learned stallion behavior to diminish. Usually, I keep the colt separated from mares for 1-2 weeks after castration. For an older stallion, you may need to keep him separated for 1-2 months until his stallion behavior diminishes. Geldings that continue to act stud-like (sometimes called Proud-cut) do so because of either memory (they have bred mares and know what it is all about) or higher levels of steroid production from their adrenal glands. A TRUE proud-cut stallion has testicular tissue left in. Reasons for this include: a cryptorchid stallion where one testicle was removed and the other is retained in the abdomen OR a lay-person who mistakenly removed the epididymus and not the testicle. A blood test and/or ultrasound can check for this condition.

Now that your horse is castrated, we hope you both enjoy his new social life as a gelding. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at 623-800-5541.