



### Neutering

**THE RSPCA STRONGLY SUGGESTS THAT ALL RABBITS THAT ARE NOT INTENDED FOR BREEDING SHOULD BE NEUTERED.**

There are several benefits to neutering your rabbits, both from a behavioural and a health point of view. If you neuter your rabbits, you not only prevent the risk of unwanted litters, you also reduce the risk of tumours in females and may reduce territorial aggression and undesired sexual behaviours in both sexes.

#### WELFARE CONCERNS

Intact (un-neutered) female rabbits are at a high risk of developing tumours (uterine adenocarcinoma is the most common tumour of female rabbits). In females older than 3 years of age, incidence may approach 80%.

Intact rabbits within the same enclosure may show territorial aggression and undesired sexual behaviours such as fighting and urine spraying (in males), particularly if the rabbits have inadequate space and are not provided with suitable hiding places. Neutering reduces the likelihood of fighting in both male and female rabbits, which allows rabbits, which are social animals, to be kept in friendly pairs or groups.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

If your rabbit is not intended for breeding, the RSPCA recommends that you neuter your rabbit, as this can improve your rabbit's behaviour and health. Neutering can take place at 12 weeks of age for males and 16 weeks of age for females. Rabbits must always be provided with adequate space, enrichment and multiple hiding places.

The best pair bond for pet rabbits is considered to be a neutered male and a neutered female. Neutering may help the female-male bond by ensuring neither is frustrated by hormones produced by the other rabbit and by reducing the likelihood of fighting. Same-sex pairs of neutered rabbits from the same litter can also make a good pair combination. Although neutered same-sex pairs can occasionally have disputes, these are much less likely if they are introduced before 12 weeks of age, or are from the same litter.

If an owner is concerned about their rabbit's behaviour, they should first get their pet checked by a vet to rule out any form of illness or injury which could be causing the behaviour and, if necessary they can then be referred to an appropriate behaviour expert. The RSPCA would recommend consulting a clinical animal behaviourist recognised by the Association for the Study of Animal Behaviour (ASAB) or the Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors (APBC).





## Neutering of Rabbits

### RSPCA COMPANION ANIMALS PET CARE FACTSHEET

#### OTHER POSSIBLE LINKS:

- [Animal welfare act webpage](#)
- [Welfare needs webpages for rabbits](#)
- [Find a vet webpage](#)

*Links to the web pages of other organisations are provided for additional information only and do not imply any endorsement by the RSPCA of those organisations or of any content on the website.*

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