



Sterilisations (Desexing) in Exotic Pets!

Sterilisation is the term commonly used for when pets have surgery to remove part of their reproductive tract making them unable to breed. Most cats and dogs are sterilised however in smaller pet mammal species, such as rabbits, guinea pigs, rats and ferrets it is often overlooked. Today's article will cover why it is just as important that your smaller pets are sterilised too!

What are the different types of sterilisation?

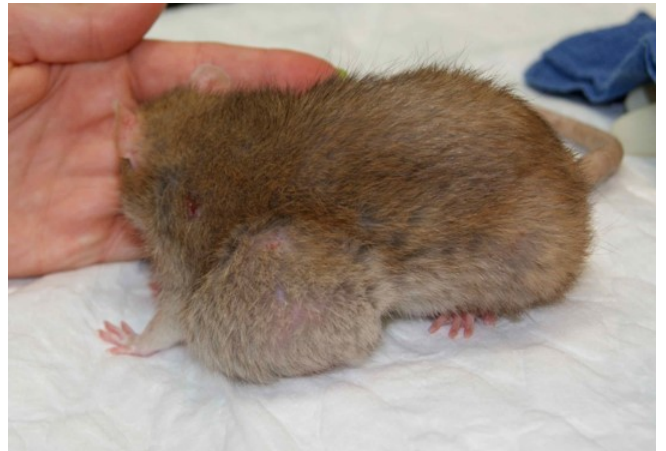
The most common form of sterilisation is when an animal undergoes surgery to remove part of their reproductive tract. There are also medical forms of temporary sterilisation that involve hormonal injections or implants; however, these will not be covered in this article.

Castration is the term used when sterilising a male animal and involves the removal of the testicles. Spey is the term commonly used when sterilising a female animal and generally involves the removal of the ovaries and uterus. In general, either surgery is a day procedure where your pet is dropped off to the veterinary clinic in the morning, has surgery during the day and then goes home that afternoon or evening. Recommended sterilisation ages vary on the species but can be performed as early as 3 months of age in some cases.

Why should I sterilise my pet?

There are a number of health and behavioural benefits from sterilising your pet including:

- Eliminating the risk of testicular cancer in males
- A reduction of unwanted behaviours (such as urine spraying, humping/mounting, biting, aggression)
- Reducing the smell that ferrets give off
- Eliminating the risk of uterine cancer in females. This is particularly important in rabbits as up to 80% of rabbits over two years of age will develop uterine cancer.
- Eliminating the risk of cystic ovary disease (particularly important in guinea pigs as this is very common) and ovarian cancer
- Reducing the risk of mammary cancer development (particularly important in rats)
- Preventing female ferrets suffering from life-threatening anaemia (low red blood cells) if they are 'in season' too long
- Decreasing the risk of faecal impaction in male guinea pigs



In addition to the benefits listed above sterilisation prevents any unwanted (and unexpected) pregnancies!

