

Post Operative Management of Horses following Castration

- Colts may be able to cover mares and get them in foal for a short period following castration.
- Possible complications include:
 1. Any abnormal tissue protruding from the wound requires immediate attention
 2. Bleeding: We will not leave until any bleeding has stopped or reduced to an insignificant level. However, bleeding can restart at a later time; with time the likelihood reduces. The scrotal incisions are left open to allow drainage and one should expect some drainage of blood stained fluid. Even if this continues for several days it is not significant. However, if there is a fast drip of blood contact us if it is not slowing within an hour. If a continuous stream of blood is not stopping within 2-3 minutes we should be contacted. Sometimes fluid will accumulate within the scrotum and be released in a gush as the horse shifts his weight. This should be clearly stopping in 15-20 seconds.
 3. Swelling. Likelihood of swelling increases with size and age of the horse. Any swelling **WILL NOT PREVENT URINATION**. It takes 2 forms:
 - Swelling of the sheath occurs in the first 2-3 days after castration due to prevention of tissue fluid drainage from that area. It causes discomfort which causes the horse to stand feeling sorry for himself which allows more swelling and a vicious circle ensues. Exercise has a massaging effect which reduces swelling. If swelling exceeds the size of a double handful (depending on the size of the colt) contact us for further treatment.
 - Swelling at the scrotum usually occurs 4-5 days after castration and often results from post operative infection. The bloody fluid in the scrotum is an ideal medium for bacteria to develop and it is important that as much drainage as possible is achieved by exercise. The colt has been covered for tetanus but may require further antibiotic cover. If the scrotum exceeds a double fistful in size or the horse becomes dull and inappetent we should be contacted.

Exercise is the key to good recovery. Wherever possible horses should be turned out. If this is not possible or if the horse does not exercise himself, he should be lunged or walked in hand several times a day.

If you are concerned about your horse's recovery, contact us on the above number.