
Bold Springs Veterinary Service

JASON WALL, D.V.M.

(540) 552-1991

Equine Castration

There are four major complications associated with castration:

1. Evisceration - This is the rarest but most serious complication. It occurs when the intestines drop through the castration site due to a congenital defect in the horse's abdominal wall. If this should happen to occur, it is an emergency situation and you should call immediately. In the mean time, keep the horse quiet and in a clean area.
2. Hemorrhage - The next most serious complication is post-operative bleeding. If bleeding persists, please call. It may be necessary to anesthetize the horse again to stop the bleeding. Dripping is normal, but a stream is not.
3. Infection - the far more common complication of surgery and is generally less serious. Infection can occur in the skin wound itself or in the remaining spermatic cord. Surgeons report from a 5%-15% rate of occurrence. One of the biggest factors that influence infection rate is the occurrence of the fourth complication, swelling.
4. Swelling – the most common complication. It will be the most severe from days 4-7 following surgery. If too much swelling occurs, it will impede drainage and this can lead to infection. Daily exercise is critical to prevent swelling.

Post-operative instructions:

- Keep your gelding in the stall for about 24hrs to decrease the chance of bleeding. Monitor frequently.
- **Starting tomorrow, turn out and exercise for at least 20 minutes twice daily for 2 weeks.** He should be worked sufficiently to begin sweating. After the first day, the less time he spends in the stall the better.
- Please monitor him carefully for the following: excessive bleeding, swelling, foul smelling or pus-like discharge, any large tissues hanging from the castration site, mental depression or decreased appetite. If any of these things are noticed please call immediately.