

## How much is a rabbit castrate or spay?

It must be a straight-forward price mustn't it? After all every vet does the same op don't they? Well actually it's not as simple as that – let us explain:

Bunnies are a 'prey species' – in the wild they are food for all sorts of predators, and are very smell-sensitive (to detect these predators) If a bunny comes to the vets and smells dogs and cats, it will automatically be frightened – its adrenaline will be flowing, and a stressed bunny becomes a greater anaesthetic risk!

At Blue House, we have a separate bunny ward (with room for companion bunnies to stay for company if appropriate), so that every bunny is hopefully calm and unstressed throughout.



To minimise the risks of anaesthetics further, all bunnies are put on a drip during the operation—an intravenous catheter is inserted into the ear for this. Nurses monitor the heart and breathing rate during the anaesthetic. Should any emergency develop and we need to give drugs quickly, we have instant access to the bloodstream through the drip.

Before the operation, all of our bunnies are given pain relief, along with an injection to encourage their bowel motion (metoclopramide) and an oral antacid (ranitidine) to help prevent ulcers. These things all help to reduce the rabbit problem of "gut stasis" which can be very serious.



During the operation, we insert lubricant into the eyes to stop them drying and getting sore.



All 'small furrries' are very prone to heat loss & hypothermia during operations and recovery, so our patients are kept on a heat-pad whilst in theatre, are wrapped up in heat reflective foil whenever possible, and go into an incubator once surgery is finished. When fully recovered, they go back to their own bunny ward. If they have not eaten within an hour of waking up, we will syringe feed a liquid rabbit food to help reduce any gut stasis. This can be sent home with the bunny if necessary.

Oh, and of course there is the op itself – that's the "easy" bit, and the part that is pretty much the same from vet to vet.

Except that we close the wounds without exposed skin stitches, so nothing for them to pull out if they chew. We also use a highly specialised tube to provide a secure airway for our rabbit patients called a "V-Gel", a revolutionary piece of equipment which makes our rabbit anaesthetics much safer.



Does all this matter? We think so. Anything that can make an operation significantly safer has to be worth considering – why settle for anything less than the best?

So, if you are asking around for prices, also ask whether they receive the same care they receive at Blue House – you may be surprised!