



Assessment of neutered status – male cats

This guidance may be helpful for vets being asked to appraise the neutered status of male cats in the care of Cats Protection (CP) where previous medical records are unavailable, and/or where there are suspicions of cryptorchidism.

Options	Comments	CP Preferred options for CP Cats
Physical assessment of scrotal region	Presence of testicles indicates entire status, but absence of testicles does not necessarily confirm neutered status – it can be useful to consider previous veterinary and owner history, size of empty scrotum, evidence of recent surgery, age, and other traits of entire status.	✓
Entire traits	Male head/face shape, odour of urine, behaviour, stud tail.	✓
Presence of penile spines	Usually start to develop at 12 weeks of age and are usually fully present by five to six months of age. Start to disappear within two weeks of neutering and are fully regressed within six to eight weeks of neutering. May falsely indicate a neutered status in a very young entire male which has not yet developed penile spines. May falsely indicate an entire status in a recently neutered male in which penile spines have not yet regressed – check for evidence of recent surgery.	✓
Stimulation test (HCG/GnRH)	Stimulation of functional testicular tissue leads to a rise in testosterone levels. More reliable than single testosterone assay, but again may falsely indicate a neutered status in young entire males which have not yet reached puberty. Drugs not licensed for use in cats.	✓ if an entire status is suspected and external testicles are not apparent – it may be useful if exploratory laparotomy is contraindicated.
Exploratory surgery	Usually confirms neutered status, but may be unnecessary if cat is already neutered (anorchidism is extremely rare in cats).	✓ if physical examination and/or behaviour suggest exploratory laparotomy is indicated.
Testosterone assay	Functional testicular tissue produces testosterone. High levels suggest presence of functional testicular tissue. However, testosterone levels may vary and a low level may be present in an entire adult male as well as in young entire males which have not yet reached puberty.	