

# Castration: Lambs



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Please note:

- Each booklet illustrates one way to perform a skill and it is acknowledged that there are often other approaches. Before using the booklets students should check with their university or college whether the approach illustrated is acceptable in their context or whether an alternative method should be used.
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Equipment list:

Castration: Lambs

Equipment for this station:

- Lamb – model (or cadaver for PM room practical only)
- Rubber rings
- Elastrator

Considerations for this station:

- Do not put a ring on any part of your own or anyone else's anatomy

Anyone working in the Clinical Skills Lab must read the 'CSL\_I01 Induction' and agree to abide by the 'CSL\_I00 House Rules' & 'CSL\_I02 Lab Area Rules'

Please inform a member of staff if equipment is damaged or about to run out.



# Clinical Skills: Castration: Lambs

1



Select a rubber ring. Ensure the 4 pins of the elastrator are fully closed i.e. tight together (the handles of the elastrator will be fully open).

2



Roll the rubber ring over the 4 small pins of the elastrator until the ring is at the base of the pins (see photo inset top right).

3



Gently grasp the scrotum near the abdomen between the thumb and finger of your non-dominant hand. Gently press to move both testes down into the base of the scrotum.

4



With your dominant hand, close the handles of the elastrator to open the pins to their full capacity to open/stretch the rubber ring. Continue to secure the testes within the scrotum with your other hand.

5



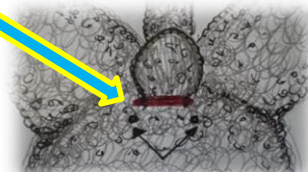
With the free end of the elastrator pins pointed towards the scrotum, slide the elastrator and ring over the scrotum towards the lamb's abdomen until the ring has passed all the way over both testicles.

6



Release the elastrator handles to close the ring around the scrotum. Check by palpation that both testicles are in the scrotum. If at this point either nipple has become trapped, gently roll it out from under the ring.

Make sure that both nipples are free of the rubber ring.





# Clinical Skills: Castration: Lambs



Carefully ease/roll the rubber ring off the pins of the elastrator.

Close the handles of the elastrator to open the pins and slide the elastrator off the scrotum.

Always check that both testicles are in the scrotum distal to the ring. Also check that neither of the nipples has been inadvertently included.

If either of the above is incorrect, the ring will need to be removed. Remove the ring using a curved scalpel blade:



or a pair of scissors. Then re-apply a ring correctly.



- Consider carefully whether castration is necessary within a particular flock. Castration is unlikely to be necessary if it is certain that lambs will be finished and sent to slaughter before reaching sexual maturity (4-4.5 months of age). For example large singles may not require castration if they are sold as fat lambs at 12-13 weeks of age. However, lambs that take longer to finish or are sold as stores will need to be castrated.
- Castration should not be performed on lambs until the ewe-lamb bond has formed and become established. Castration with a rubber ring is usually performed at about 24 hours after birth.
- Under the Protection of Animals (Anaesthetics) Act 1954, the use of a rubber ring, or other device to restrict blood flow to the scrotum, is only permitted without an anaesthetic during the first week of life.
- Consideration should be given to the use of analgesia as basic standard good practice e.g. a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (under the cascade) or a specialised ring applicator, combined with an injector that dispenses local anaesthetic.
- Under the Veterinary Surgery Act 1966, only a veterinary surgeon may castrate a lamb which has reached the age of 3 months.

## Test Yourself

What is the maximum age for rubber ring castration without anaesthetic?

What analgesia could be given when performing ring castration?





## Resetting the station: Castration: Lambs

1. Use scissors to remove the rubber ring from around the scrotum of the model or the cadaver, if it is to be reused
2. Place all cut rubber rings in the bin
3. Put the elastrator back into the storage container

*Station ready for the next person*



Please inform a member of staff if equipment is damaged or about to run out.



# I wish I'd known: Castration: Lambs

- Have spare rubber rings to hand in case one pings off and is lost.
- Restrain the lamb before starting. This is best done by holding the lamb on its back on your lap with its head and shoulders tucked under one arm and its back legs over your knees.



- Make sure you have a curved blade (or scissors) to hand in case you need to remove an incorrectly placed ring.
- If a lamb retracts its testes and after trying to gently palpate them back into the scrotum you are unsuccessful, leave the lamb until last and then re-attempt. Failing this try again the next day as long as it is within the 7 days window (i.e. first week of life).