

## Introduction

Many clients treat mini pigs as pets, expecting veterinary care similar to that of dogs and cats. Mini pigs, defined as any pig under 300 lbs (e.g., Vietnamese Potbelly Pig, Kune Kune, Juliana), require specialized care to address their unique needs.

## Mini Pig Characteristics

- **Anatomy:** Brachiocephalic, quick reflexes, low to the ground.
- **Growth:** Frame growth stops around 3 years; metabolism slows afterward.
- **Prey Animal:** Quick, reactive behavior (e.g., loud screams, fast movement) requires careful handling.

## Physical Exam & Restraint

- **Vital Signs:** Temp: 100.5°F ± 1.5°F, Pulse: 70-120 bpm, Respiration: 20-28 breaths/min.
- **Handling:** Physical restraint preferred in non-aggressive pigs under 400 lbs. Avoid getting the pig worked up. Techniques include “the flip,” sorting boards, and minimizing flailing.

## Chemical Restraint

- **Key Rules:**
  1. Pigs process alpha-2 agonists poorly.
  2. Ketamine is acceptable if not the longest-lasting drug.
  3. Butorphanol and midazolam are essential.
  4. Gas anesthesia requires pre-medication.
  5. Use a long needle to reach muscle.
  6. Wait 10 minutes after injectables before proceeding.

## Cocktail List:

- **Trimming:** Midazolam 3ml/100lb IM +/- Butorphanol 1ml/100lb IM.
- **Castration:** Butorphanol 0.3mg/kg IM, Midazolam 0.3mg/kg IM, +/- Ketamine 4.5mg/kg IM, Isoflurane.
- **Spay/Abdominal Surgery:** Butorphanol 0.3mg/kg IM, Midazolam 0.3mg/kg IM, Ketamine 9mg/kg IM, Isoflurane.
- **Large Pig Trims:** Telazol 1ml/200-400lbs IM, wait 10 minutes +/- Butorphanol/Midazolam combo.

## Common Procedures

- **Foot Trimming:** Tools include a rotary tool, nippers, and a dremel. Regular trimming (every 4-6 months) maintains hoof health.

- **Tusk Trimming:** Upper tusks ("whettters") sharpen lower tusks. Lower tusks ("cutters") need regular trimming with Gigli wire and a dremel.
- **Neutering:** IM sedation followed by a midline incision for testicle removal. Use of anesthesia and antibiotics is crucial.
- **Spaying:** Uterus and ovaries are removed via midline incision. Spaying is recommended after the first heat cycle, at over 20 lbs.

## Common Health Issues

- **Obesity:** Linked to conditions like arthritis and entropion. A diet of reduced pelleted feed and vegetables (e.g., cucumbers, zucchini) is recommended.
- **Arthritis:** Common in the elbow, stifle, and digits. Treatment includes corrective trimming and medications such as NSAIDs (Meloxicam 1mg/kg, Carprofen 4.4mg/kg), gabapentin, and Adequan.
- **Ulcers:** Symptoms include inappetence and vomiting. Treatment includes sucralfate, omeprazole, and frequent small meals.
- **Constipation:** Typically related to dehydration. Treatment includes enemas, laxatives, and fluids.
- **Upper Respiratory Issues:** Pigs are prone to pneumonia, treated with antibiotics (e.g., Excede, Tulathromycin) and steroids (e.g., dexamethasone).
- **Overheating:** Provide shade, misters, and airflow. Pharmacological treatments include Banamine S and dexamethasone.

## Vaccination Protocols

- **Core:** Tetanus toxoid, Rhinishield TX4 (Bordetella, Pasteurella, Erysipelas).
- **Optional:** Rabies (caution: high reaction rate), Leptospirosis (case-dependent).

## Conclusion

Mini pigs require specialized veterinary care that includes precise handling techniques, regular hoof and tusk maintenance, tailored chemical restraint, and preventive healthcare. Understanding their unique behaviors and anatomy is key to effective treatment and long-term health.