

The Advantages of Neutering & Spaying

Neutering and spaying are routine medical procedures that require little post-surgical home care. In fact, most pets return to normal behavior within days of surgery. Dogs and cats weighing more than 2 pounds and at least 8 weeks of age can safely endure anesthesia to be neutered or spayed. Studies have shown that there are little to no adverse effects to neutering or spaying dogs or cats at this age.

The most publicized advantage to neutering and spaying is the reduction of pet overpopulation. By spaying one female cat and neutering one male cat, we have prevented the birth of 400,000 cats within seven years. One male dog and one female dog can be responsible for up to 50 puppies per year! Without enough homes for them all, homeless animals live very short, difficult lives that often end painfully by starvation, disease, freezing or injury. In addition to helping control dog and cat overpopulation, there are many more advantages to neutering or spaying your pet.

Medical Advantages

- Females that are spayed before their first heat cycle have a decreased risk of developing mammary tumors or uterine infections. Mammary tumors are fatal in approximately 50% of dogs and 90% of cats. Uterine infections such as pyometria also can be fatal. Surgical intervention is often required for successful treatment of uterine infections.
- Neutering males can prevent testicular cancer, prostate disease and hernias.
- Sterilized pets live an average of 2-3 years longer than unsterilized pets. With proper exercise and diet a sterilized pet can maintain optimum health and body size throughout their lifetime.
- Intact female dogs experience a bloody discharge for at least one week during their heat cycle, which occurs roughly every six months. Spayed females will not have this messy experience, which prevents frequent cleaning required on your part!

Behavioral Advantages

- Males that are neutered experience a decreased, hormonal need to breed and thus tend to stop roaming in search of a breeding partner. This can decrease the risk they will experience when roaming such as injury from being hit by a car, injured from a fight with another animal or meeting humans with unkind intentions. The energy they would have spent roaming can now be focused on their human families.
- Neutered males mark their territory with strong-smelling urine much less often than unneutered males. Unneutered males also may mount objects such as pillows, toys and human legs or arms.
- Intact female cats often caterwaul (meow loudly) and urinate more frequently – sometimes outside of the litterbox – which advertises her reproductive status to males who may travel great distances to find her. You may find that you have intact male cats roaming around your home if your female is in heat. A spayed female will have a decreased urge to mark her territory with urine.
- Neutering or spaying your pet can prevent or reduce the intensity of various behavioral problems such as inappropriate elimination (house-soiling and/or spraying) and aggression disorders.