

REASONS TO SPAY and NEUTER

There are many reasons to spay and neuter animals, ranging from health issues to preventing overpopulation. Many myths also surround spaying and neutering. Hopefully, this article will help clarify some of them.

Spaying and neutering has benefits for your animals that you may have never thought of. One of the most important is the reduction of an animal's chances of getting cancer. Spaying a female dog or cat before she goes into heat for the first time is believed by many veterinarians to reduce her chance of developing several types of cancer: ovarian, uterine, and breast. (Breast cancer is the second most common cancer in pets.) Neutering a male dog or cat is thought to prevent testicular cancer if it is done before six months of age.

Further, an infection in the uterus, called pyometra, is common in older female animals that are not spayed. This infection can be deadly, or at the least, require expensive surgery. By spaying and neutering your pets, you will be improving their health, thereby granting them a longer life.

An unsplayed female will go into heat several times a year which can prove very disruptive. There will be a bloody discharge for four to five days during every heat. Male animals will catch the scent and seek out the female in hopes of breeding her, sometimes fighting amongst each other for the chance. The female may try and escape in an effort to find a mate. Even if the female is not successful, she may go into a false pregnancy.

Neutering your male pets can help with aggression problems. Unneutered males have a tendency to want to roam, looking for a mate. Once out on their own, they run the risk of getting hit in traffic, causing vehicle accidents, or getting in fights with other animals. Roaming increases the chances that dogs will chase wildlife or run around in packs which may terrorize people and other animals. Unneutered males may also try and mark their territory by spraying urine. This may be done inside your house and around your yard producing a very unpleasant odor.

Many people worry that if they spay and neuter their pets, they will be "unfulfilled". Animals do not have any concept of their sexual identity. Neutering a male will not make it less of a male. Not having a litter will not cause a female to feel like she has missed out on something. Animals' personalities will not change nor will they have any emotional reaction to the surgery. These are human emotions and do not apply to animals.

Some people have the idea that their pets should be allowed one litter so their children can experience the miracle of birth. Something most people never contemplate, however, is how their children will be affected when there are difficult births. Puppies and kittens can be born dead, or die a few hours or days later. The mother sometimes unexpectedly dies, too. There are other, better ways to let children learn about the birthing process.

Getting fat after an animal is fixed is a myth. An animal will not gain weight due to spaying and neutering if their diet is healthy and appropriate for their level of activity, their breed, and age. Both male and female animals may become mellower, but they do not need to gain weight as a result.

The most important reason to spay and neuter is to prevent pet overpopulation. An unspayed female dog averages **two** litters per year with **six** to **ten** puppies per litter and an unspayed female cat averages **three** litters per year with **four** to **six** kitties per litter. If the mother animals and their descendents survive for their full reproductive age, there would be 67,000 dogs in six years and 420,000 cats in seven years. They multiply like rabbits!

Pet overpopulation means many animals end up in shelters across the nation. **IT IS ESTIMATED THAT SIX TO EIGHT MILLION DOGS AND CATS END UP IN SHELTERS IN THE US EVERY YEAR.** The cost to pick up, house, feed, and euthanize one homeless animal in a shelter is a costly proposition. The fewer unwanted animals, the less expense to the community.

The animals that do not get adopted from shelters will often get euthanized...put to death. The number of animals killed each year, is staggering. **IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THREE TO FOUR MILLION DOGS AND CATS ARE EUTHANIZED YEARLY.** That is one animal every eight seconds. If you love animals, please spay and neuter your pets. The answer to lowering these staggering numbers is easy...spay and neuter your pets!"

Spaying and neutering your animals is healthy for you, your animals, and the community.

JUST DO IT!!