

## MYTHS & MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT SPAYING AND NEUTERING

Last month, we discussed the importance of spaying and neutering your pets. There are a variety of reasons given for not spaying and neutering. Let's look at some misconceptions regarding why people avoid the procedure.

**Reason #1:** I may want to breed my dog.

In a recent survey, this was the most common reason given for not spaying and neutering. The animals being bred were not necessarily purebreds. It was just as often families that merely "wanted puppies". Given the fact that there are so many unwanted dogs, cats, puppies, and kittens in shelters across the country, there really is no reason to breed your pet.

**Reason #2:** The cost of the procedure is too expensive.

This was a major reason why some people did not spay and neuter their animals. The lower the cost of the procedure, the more likely that people would do it. In general, women, younger people, and lower income people are more likely to cite cost as a reason not to spay and neuter. (Men, however, were much more likely to not spay/neuter their pets than women.) Many veterinarians will periodically hold low-cost spay/neuter clinics to help out those that can't afford the procedure. In some places, like Grand County, organizations like Pet Pals will help fund spaying and neutering for those that can't afford it.

**Reason #3:** a) I don't want to "mutilate" my dog. b) If I don't let her go into heat once, she'll get cancer.

Spaying and neutering do not mutilate the animal. In less than a month following the procedure, the fact that an animal has been neutered or spayed can not be told. In addition, male dogs can now be "chemically" neutered.

Spaying and neutering can actually benefit an animal. For example, allowing a female dog to go into heat can actually increase her risk of mammary cancer, the most common cancer in female dogs. Spaying actually eliminates the risk of ovarian cancer and pyometra (a life-threatening uterus infection). There is no known benefit to allowing a dog to go through a heat cycle or have a litter of puppies. As for males, neutered pets are less likely to roam from home and be injured

in fights or killed in traffic. Neutered males have a much lower chance of suffering from prostate and testicular cancers.

**Reason #4:** My dog doesn't go outside so it isn't necessary to neuter/spay.

The instinct to mate is very strong in animals. Why go through the mess of a heat, the fighting off of "suitsors", and trying to keep your pets from escaping out of the yard and the house? "Accidents" do happen! Animals do get away. Since there are many benefits to spaying and neutering, why take that chance?

**Reason #5:** I'll give the puppies/kitties to a good home.

Even if you find "good homes" for your litter of animals, you are still contributing to the overpopulation problem. When you find a home for one of your puppies or kitties, you have removed a potential home for some other cat or dog. Each year, around 15 million pets are turned into animal shelters across the country. Only 25 to 30 percent of these animals are reclaimed by their owners or adopted into new homes. The rest, some 11 million dogs, cats, puppies, and kittens, are put to death because no one wants them. The world does not need more unwanted animals.

**Again, the bottom line is IF YOU LOVE YOUR PETS, SPAY AND NEUTER THEM!!**