



## Benefits of Spaying and Neutering your Pet

By spaying or neutering your pet, you'll help control the pet homelessness crisis, which results in millions of healthy dogs and cats being euthanized in the United States each year simply because there aren't enough homes to go around. Spaying/neutering your pets is also highly cost-effective. The cost of your pet's spay/neuter surgery is far less than the cost of having and caring for a litter.

There are also medical and behavioral benefits to spaying (female pets) and neutering (male pets) your animals. Your female pet will live a longer, healthier life. Spaying helps prevent uterine infections and breast tumors, which are malignant or cancerous in about 50 percent of dogs and 90 percent of cats. Spaying your pet before her first heat offers the best protection from these diseases. Neutering your male companion prevents testicular cancer and some prostate problems.

Behavioral benefits are also a benefit. Your spayed female pet won't go into heat. While cycles can vary, female felines usually go into heat four to five days every three weeks during breeding season. In an effort to advertise for mates, they'll yowl and urinate more frequently—sometimes all over the house! Your male dog will be less likely to roam away from home. An intact male will do just about anything to find a mate, including finding creative ways escape from the house. Once he's free to roam, he risks injury in traffic and fights with other male animals. Your neutered male may be better behaved. Unneutered dogs and cats are more likely to mark their territory by spraying strong-smelling urine all over the house. Your dog might be less likely to mount other dogs, people and inanimate objects after he's neutered. Some aggression problems may be avoided by early neutering.

We've all heard the misconception that spaying or neutering will cause your pet to become overweight but lack of exercise and overfeeding will cause your pet to pack on the extra pounds—not neutering/spaying. Your pet will remain fit and trim as long as you continue to provide exercise and monitor her food intake. Neutering is not a quick fix for all behavior problems. Although neutering your pet often reduces undesirable behaviors caused by a higher level of testosterone, there's no guarantee that your dog's behavior will change after he's neutered. Although the surgery will reduce the amount of testosterone in your dog's system, it won't eliminate the hormone completely. Neutering will also not reduce behaviors that your pet has learned or that have become habitual. The effects of neutering are largely dependent on your dog's individual personality, physiology and history.

While the traditional age for neutering is six to nine months, puppies as young as eight weeks old can be neutered as long as they're healthy. Dogs can be neutered as adults as well, although there's a slightly higher risk of post-operative complications in older dogs, dogs that are overweight or dogs that have health problems. For cats, it is generally considered safe for kittens

as young as eight weeks old to be spayed or neutered. In animal shelters, surgery is often performed at this time so that kittens can be sterilized prior to adoption. In an effort to avoid the start of urine spraying and eliminate the chance for pregnancy, it's advisable to schedule the surgery before your own cat reaches five months of age. It's possible to spay a female cat while she's in heat.

Talk to your veterinarian to determine the best time to spay or neuter your pet.

## Why should you spay or neuter your pet?

### 1. Your female pet will live a longer, healthier life.

Spaying helps prevent uterine infections and breast cancer, which is fatal in about 50 percent of dogs and 90 percent of cats. Spaying your pet before her first heat offers the best protection from these diseases.

### 2. Neutering provides major health benefits for your male.

Besides preventing unwanted litters, neutering your male companion prevents testicular cancer, if done before six months of age.

### 3. Your spayed female won't go into heat.

While cycles can vary, female felines usually go into heat four to five days every three weeks during breeding season. In an effort to advertise for mates, they'll yowl and urinate more frequently—sometimes all over the house!

### 4. Your male dog won't want to roam away from home.

An intact male will do just about anything to find a mate! That includes digging his way under the fence and making like Houdini to escape from the house. And once he's free to roam, he risks injury in traffic and fights with other males.

### 5. Your neutered male will be much better behaved.

Neutered cats and dogs focus their attention on their human families. On the other hand, unneutered dogs and cats may mark their territory by spraying strong-smelling urine all over the house. Many aggression problems can be avoided by early neutering.

### 6. Spaying or neutering will NOT make your pet fat.

Don't use that old excuse! Lack of exercise and overfeeding will cause your pet to pack on the extra pounds—not neutering. Your pet will remain fit and trim as long as you continue to provide exercise and monitor food intake.

### 7. It is highly cost-effective.

The cost of your pet's spay/neuter surgery is a lot less than the cost of having and caring for a litter. It also beats the cost of treatment when your unneutered tom escapes and gets into fights with the neighborhood stray!

### 8. Spaying and neutering your pet is good for the community.

Stray animals pose a real problem in many parts of the country. They can prey on wildlife, cause car accidents, damage the local fauna and frighten children. Spaying and neutering packs a powerful punch in reducing the number of animals on the streets.

### 9. Your pet doesn't need to have a litter for your children to learn about the miracle of birth.

Letting your pet produce offspring you have no intention of keeping is not a good lesson for your children—especially when so many unwanted animals end up in shelters. There are tons of books and videos available to teach your children about birth in a more responsible way.

### 10. Spaying and neutering helps fight pet overpopulation.

Every year, millions of cats and dogs of all ages and breeds are euthanized or suffer as strays. These high numbers are the result of unplanned litters that could have been prevented by spaying or neutering.



An unspayed female cat, her mate and all of their offspring, producing 2 litters per year, with 2.8 surviving kittens per litter can total:

1 year: 12  
2 years: 67  
3 years: 376  
4 years: 2,107  
5 years: 11,801  
6 years: 66,088  
7 years: 370,092  
8 years: 2,072,514  
9 years: 11,606,077



**An unspayed female dog, her mate and all of their puppies, if none are ever neutered or spayed up to:**

1 year = 16      2 years = 128      3 years = 512  
4 years = 2,048      5 years = 12,288      6 years = 67,000

