

WHY SPAY OR NEUTER YOUR PET?

What do “spay” and “neuter” really mean?

Female dogs and cats are spayed by removing their reproductive organs, and male dogs and cats are neutered by removing their testicles. In both cases the operation is performed while the animal is under anesthesia. Depending on your pet's age, size, and health, he or she will stay at your veterinarian's office for a few hours or a few days. Depending upon the procedure, your pet may need stitches removed after a few days. Your veterinarian can fully explain spay and neuter procedures to you and discuss with you the best age at which to sterilize your pet.

Spaying or Neutering is Good for Your Pet

- Spaying and neutering helps dogs and cats live longer, healthier lives.
- Spaying and neutering can eliminate or reduce the incidence of a number of health problems that can be very difficult or expensive to treat.
- Spaying eliminates the possibility of uterine or ovarian cancer and greatly reduces the incidence of breast cancer, particularly when your pet is spayed before her first estrous cycle.
- Neutering eliminates testicular cancer and decreases the incidence of prostate disease.

Spaying or Neutering is Good for You

- Spaying and neutering makes pets better, more affectionate companions.
- Neutering cats makes them less likely to spray and mark territory.
- Spaying a dog or cat eliminates her heat cycle. Estrus lasts an average of six to 12 days, often twice a year, in dogs and an average of six to seven days, three or more times a year, in cats. Females in heat can cry incessantly, show nervous behavior and attract unwanted male animals.
- Unsterilized animals often exhibit more behavior and temperament problems than do those who have been spayed or neutered.
- Spaying and neutering can make pets less likely to bite.
- Neutering makes pets less likely to roam the neighborhood, run away or get into fights.

Spaying and Neutering are Good for the Community

- Communities spend millions of dollars to control unwanted animals.
- Irresponsible breeding contributes to the problem of dog bites and attacks.
- Animal shelters are overburdened with surplus animals.
- Stray pets and homeless animals get into trash containers, defecate in public areas or on private lawns and frighten or anger people who have no understanding of their misery or needs.

Spay or neuter surgery carries a one-time cost that is relatively small when one considers its benefits. It's a small price to pay for the health of your pet and the prevention of more unwanted animals.



Here are a few frequently asked questions about spaying or neutering your pet:

Did you know that a spayed or neutered (sterilized) animal is better behaved?

Males – Neutered cats and dogs focus their attention on their human families. On the other hand, unsterilized, unsupervised males roam in search of a mate, risking injury in traffic and in fights with other males. They mark territory by spraying strong-smelling urine on surfaces. Indoors, male dogs may embarrass you by mounting furniture and human legs when stimulated. Don't confuse aggressiveness with protectiveness; a neutered dog protects his home and family just as well as unneutered dog, and many aggression problems can be avoided by early neutering.

Females – While their cycles vary greatly, most female cats exhibit the following signs when in heat. For four or five days, every three weeks, they yowl and urinate more frequently – sometimes all over the house – advertising for mates. Often, they attract unneutered males who spray urine around the females' home. Female dogs also attract males from great distances. Female dogs generally have a bloody discharge for about a week, and can conceive for another week or so.

Did you know that a spayed or neutered animal will live a longer, healthier life?

Spaying a female (removing the ovaries and uterus) or neutering a male (removing the testicles) are veterinary procedures performed with the same general anesthesia used in human medicine. Both surgeries usually require minimal hospitalization.

Neutering a male cat or dog by six months of age prevents testicular cancer, prostate disease and hernias. Spaying a female cat or dog helps prevent pyometra and breast cancer; having this done before the first heat offers the best protection from these diseases. Treatment of pyometra requires hospitalization, intravenous (IV) fluids, antibiotics and spaying. Breast cancer can be fatal in about 50 percent of female dogs and 90 percent of female cats. With an older, seriously ill animal, anesthesia and surgery are complicated and costly.

Did you know that you help prevent the suffering and death of millions of animals?

One cat or dog who has babies and whose babies have babies can be responsible for the birth of 50 to 200 kittens or puppies in one year! Almost everyone loves puppies and kittens, but some people lose interest when these animals grow up. As a result, millions of cats and dogs of all ages and breeds are euthanized annually or suffer as strays. Rarely surviving for more than a few years on their own, strays die painfully by starvation, disease, freezing or being hit by cars.

To schedule a low-cost spay/neuter appointment at the
Marge Wright Veterinary Clinic, call 602.997.7585, Ext. 4001.

To schedule a low-cost spay/neuter appointment at the
Margaret McAllister Brock Veterinary Clinic, call 602.997.7585, Ext. 4000.

For more information, please visit azhumane.org.

