

To Spay and Neuter: A Good Idea

There is no question:

To spay or neuter your dog or cat is good for your pet's health, for you as a caring pet owner, and for your community.

Health Benefits

Spaying/neutering offers a variety of medical benefits that helps your dog or cat live longer and remain healthy.

- Spaying reduces the chances of females developing mammary tumors and eliminates future uterine infections and uterine and ovarian cancers.
- Neutering of males reduces the likelihood of prostate disease and eliminates the risk of testicular cancer.

“Early-age” spaying/neutering is medically sound and can be achieved as young as eight weeks of age.

This assures your pet will not accidentally mate and can also prevent some undesirable habits from forming.

Consult with a veterinarian about all of the benefits of having your pet spayed/neutered and the appropriate age for surgery. Learn how easy it is for you and your pet. These surgeries require minimal hospitalization.

Behavioral Benefits

In general, spaying or neutering means you should enjoy a calmer and more even-tempered, people-oriented pet.

- Spaying females eliminates the nervous whining, yowling, pacing behavior normally associated with a heat cycle.
- Neutering male cats reduces or eliminates territorial marking (spraying of urine on surfaces).
- Neutering also reduces excessive aggression in dogs and cats towards other animals.
- Spaying/neutering of males and females reduces the desire to roam in search of mates. There is less risk of injury from traffic accidents or from fights with other animals.
- Spayed and neutered pets are more likely to adapt well to human households and turn their attention and affection towards their owners.

Community Benefits

Spaying/neutering prevents unexpected or unwanted reproduction, often the cause of homeless animals and the reason for higher costs of animal control and the need for animal sheltering programs.

Spaying/neutering reduces a dog's or cat's desire to roam, resulting in fewer traffic accidents and neighborhood complaints of nuisance animals.

Being a responsible pet owner includes:

- Establishing an ongoing relationship with a veterinarian;
- Understanding the benefits of spaying and neutering;
- Complying with local laws covering:
 - Licensing;
 - Vaccinations; and
 - Leash laws.
- Taking precautions to prevent your pets from roaming free in the community;
- Assuring that your pet is not responsible for unplanned or unwanted offspring; and
- Learning about and providing overall good pet care and training for dogs.

Your veterinarian plays a key role in your pet's continued good health. Regular check-ups, vaccinations, and spaying/neutering are all part of responsible pet ownership.

If cost of spaying/neutering is an issue, many communities have established low-cost spay/neuter programs that make the surgery affordable. To locate a low-cost provider, check with your local animal control agency or humane society.

Dog licensing involves more than simply paying a fee, it ensures that you are complying with rabies vaccination requirements. Many communities offer lower license fees for spayed or neutered dogs, so check with your local animal control agency to find out how easy it is for you to comply with the law.

A license, identification tag, or microchip may provide a way to recover your dog or cat in the event he or she accidentally gets out of your control.

Be a responsible pet owner. It benefits your pet, and it benefits your community.

**You may make copies of this information for distribution, which is also available at:
http://www.nda.nebraska.gov/animal/dog_cat/index.html**

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