

*Top Reasons to*

# **Spay or Neuter Your Pet**

## **Major health benefits.**

Neutering your male companion can help prevent testicular cancer if done before six months of age. Spaying your female pet helps prevent uterine infections and breast cancer, which is fatal in about 50% of dogs and 90% of cats. Spaying your pet before her first heat offers the best protection from these diseases.

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

Intact dogs and cats may mark their territory by spraying strong smelling urine all over the house and they will do just about anything to escape their home in order to roam the neighborhood and find a mate. Once free, he risks injury in traffic and fights with other males. Neutered cats and dogs focus their attention on their human families.

## **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 will yowl and spray urine.

## **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 extra pounds — not neutering. Your pet will remain fit as long as you continue to provide exercise and monitor food intake.

## **It's 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.

## **Stray animals pose a real problem.**

They can prey on wildlife, cause car accidents, damage local fauna and frighten or even attack children. Spaying and neutering packs a powerful punch in reducing the number of animals on the streets.

## **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.

## **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 direct result of unplanned litters that could have been prevented by spaying or neutering.

*Don't Litter! Fix that Critter!*



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## Myths and Facts About Spaying and Neutering

**MYTH:** *My pet will get fat and lazy.*

**FACT:** The truth is that most pets get fat and lazy because their owners feed them too much and don't give them enough exercise.

**MYTH:** *It's better to have one litter first.*

**FACT:** Medical evidence indicates just the opposite. In fact, the evidence shows that females spayed before their first heat are typically healthier. Many veterinarians now sterilize dogs and cats as young as eight weeks of age. Check with your veterinarian about the appropriate time for these procedures.

**MYTH:** *My children should experience the miracle of birth.*

**FACT:** Even if children are able to see a pet give birth—which is unlikely, since it usually occurs at night and in seclusion—the lesson they will really learn is that animals can be created and discarded as it suits adults. Instead, it should be explained to children that the real miracle is life and that preventing the birth of some pets can save the lives of others.

**MYTH:** *But my pet is a purebred.*

**FACT:** So is at least one out of every four pets brought to animal shelters around the country. There are just too many dogs and cats—mixed breed *and* purebred.

**MYTH:** *I want my dog to be protective.*

**FACT:** Spaying or neutering does not affect a dog's natural instinct to protect home and family. A dog's personality is formed more by genetics and environment than by sex hormones.

**MYTH:** *I don't want my male dog or cat to feel like less of a male.*

**FACT:** Pets don't have any concept of sexual identity or ego. Neutering will not change a pet's basic personality. He doesn't suffer any kind of emotional reaction or identity crisis when neutered.

**MYTH:** *But my dog (or cat) is so special, I want a puppy (or kitten) just like her.*

**FACT:** A dog or cat may be a great pet, but that doesn't mean her offspring will be a carbon copy. Professional animal breeders who follow generations of bloodlines can't guarantee they will get just what they want out of a particular litter. A pet owner's chances are even slimmer. In fact, an entire litter of puppies or kittens might receive all of a pet's (and her mate's) worst characteristics.

**MYTH:** *It's too expensive to have my pet spayed or neutered.*

**FACT:** The cost of spaying or neutering depends on the sex, size, and age of the pet, your veterinarian's fees, and a number of other variables. But whatever the actual price, spay or neuter surgery is a one-time cost—a relatively small cost when compared to all the benefits. It's a bargain compared to the cost of having a litter and ensuring the health of the mother and litter; two months of pregnancy and another two months until the litter is weaned can add up to significant veterinary bills and food costs if complications develop. Most importantly, it's a very small price to pay for the health of your pet and the prevention of the births of more unwanted pets.

**MYTH:** *I'll find good homes for all the puppies and kittens.*

**FACT:** You may find homes for all of your pet's litter. But each home you find means one less home for the dogs and cats in shelters who need good homes. Also, in less than one year's time, each of your pet's offspring may have his or her own litter, adding even more animals to the population. The problem of pet overpopulation created and perpetuated one litter at a time.