

Spaying and Neutering – Here’s what you need to know!

Educating our clients on the importance of spaying or neutering their pet is something we take seriously. We want you to understand the facts – not just from a medical perspective, but behavioural as well – so that you can make an educated decision regarding your pet’s care. While every pet is different and we don’t want to generalize, there are trends and statistics that are hard to ignore, especially when we have seen the reality for ourselves.

We don’t want you to spay or neuter because we said so. We want you to do it because you believe it’s the right thing to do for your pet... so, here are the facts...



Why Spay?! (females)

- Spaying ensures that there is no possibility for uterine or ovarian cancer. It also dramatically reduces the risk of mammary tumors (which are malignant – cancerous – in 50% of dogs and 90% of cats).
- Breeding not only poses a health risk to our pets, it can also be a very costly venture – especially if something unexpected occurs and your pet requires a C-Section or runs into trouble during their pregnancy (let’s not forget the costs and medical care once the litter is born).
- 25% of unspayed females will develop an infection of the uterus (pyometra) by the age of 10. This condition can be fatal if left untreated, and often requires surgery.
- Heat cycles can be very disruptive. Canine heat cycles occur twice a year and result in bloody discharge, humping and excessive grooming of the swollen vulva. Feline heat cycles occur approximately every three weeks and result in presenting (hindquarters in the air), vocalizing (usually through the night), inappropriate urination or spraying and excessive grooming of the swollen vulva.

Why Neuter?! (males)



- Neutering ensures that there is no possibility of testicular cancer. It also dramatically reduces the risk of prostate issues.
- Unneutered males are intent on finding a mate. They can smell a female in heat from a kilometre away making it common for them to try and escape or roam/run away.
- Marking is an important activity for unneutered males. Urinating (in inappropriate places) and/or spraying urine allows your pet to “claim” his property.
- Unneutered males produce a lot of testosterone and this drives their urges and needs. Pent-up energy and frustration can lead to dominant and aggressive tendencies that often result in negative interactions with their humans.

- Hormonal instincts will overwhelm your pet making it very difficult for them to focus on much else. This can lead to unsettling behaviours and a lack of obedience.

The Facts

- A spay involves the removal of the uterus and ovaries (an ovariectomy) while a neuter is the removal of the testicles.
- Both procedures are done under a general anesthetic with appropriate pain control.
- While considered “routine” surgeries, our hospital takes every anesthetic procedure seriously and we are diligent in our protocols and processes to minimize risk and maximize successful outcomes.
- We recommend spaying/neutering at around 6 months of age in cats, and anywhere from 6-18 months of age in dogs (depending on their size, breed and other factors). This allows for their hormones to contribute positively to their initial development.
- Although it is typically recommended earlier in life – it’s never too late to consider spaying or neutering your pet.



Common Misconceptions

- Your pet will not automatically become chubby as a result of spaying/neutering. Proper nutrition and exercise are what will dictate your pet’s weight.
- Neutering does not automatically resolve behavioural issues – especially if those behavioural issues have been habitual for a period of time.
- Your pet will not be “happier” if you let them breed once before spaying/neutering. The dangers and risks far outweigh the rewards, and with so many unwanted pets already in our community, you will only be contributing to the pet overpopulation problem.

It is so important to us that every pet in our care has an exceptional quality of life. This means remaining healthy, but also spending enjoyable, quality time with their humans and other animals. The distraction of hormonal urges and physical changes do not support this, and the serious long-term health risks are unnecessary. We hope that you will agree – spaying or neutering is a way of maximizing your pet’s enjoyment and longevity of life!

