



# Why Spay or Neuter?

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

**This low-cost surgery keeps your animal healthier and helps fight pet overpopulation.**

## Avoid Health Problems

Spaying a female (removing the ovaries and uterus) or neutering a male (removing the testicles) are veterinary procedures performed under general anesthesia. Both surgeries usually require minimal hospitalization. The Prince William SPCA strongly recommends spaying or neutering your pet as early as possible. Besides preventing unwanted litters, neutering a male cat or dog before six months of age prevents testicular cancer and prostate disease. Spaying a female cat or dog helps prevent pyometra (a pus-filled uterus) and breast cancer. Treatment of pyometra requires hospitalization, intravenous fluids, antibiotics and spaying. Breast cancer can be fatal in about 50 percent of female dogs and 90 percent of female cats. For an older, seriously ill animal, anesthesia and surgery are complicated and costly. Spaying your pet before her first heat offers the best protection from these diseases.

## Peace of Mind

**Did you know that a spayed or neutered 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 their 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 an 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 during breeding season, they yowl and urinate more frequently – sometimes all over the house – advertising for mates. Female dogs generally have a bloody discharge for about a week, and can conceive for another week or so. Often, they attract unneutered males – some from great distances – who spray urine around the females' homes.

## Responsible Care

**Join in the fight against pet overpopulation...**

Millions of cats and dogs of all ages and breeds are euthanized annually or suffer as strays. Many of these are the result of unwanted, unplanned litters that could have been prevented by spaying or neutering. Rarely surviving for more than a few years on their own, strays die painfully by starvation, disease, freezing or being hit by cars. **Please help stop pet overpopulation by spaying or neutering your pet today!**

**For facts and myths about spay/neutering, please see reverse.**

# Spay or Neuter?

## Myth Versus Fact

**Myth:** My female cat or dog should have a litter before she is spayed.

**Fact:** The sooner you spay your female, the better her health will be in the future. As long as a kitten or puppy weighs more than two pounds and is two months old, he or she can be neutered or spayed. Many veterinarians practice safe early sterilization. The longer a female goes unspayed, the greater the likelihood of developing mammary tumors or uterine infections. In fact, a female spayed before her first heat (six to nine months of age) has one-seventh the risk of developing mammary cancer as does an intact female.

**Myth:** Spaying or neutering will alter my pet's personality.

**Fact:** Regardless of the age when spayed or neutered, your pet will remain a caring, loving and protective companion. Any slight changes will be positive. Neutering will reduce the need to breed, which has a calming effect on many animals. Both neutered male canines and felines tend to stop roaming and fighting, and they also lose the desire to mark their territory with urine.

**Myth:** Companion animals will become fat and lazy if they are neutered.

**Fact:** Absolutely not! Lack of exercise and overfeeding make pets fat and lazy – not neutering. Your pet will not gain weight if you provide exercise and monitor food intake. Also, sterilized pets tend to live an average of two to three years longer than unsterilized pets.

**Myth:** Sterilization is a dangerous and painful surgery for my pet.

**Fact:** Spaying and neutering are the most common surgeries performed on animals. With a minimal amount of home care, your pet will resume normal behavior in a couple of days.

**Myth:** Letting my pet have a litter will allow my children to witness the miracle of birth.

**Fact:** Countless books and videos are available to teach your children about birth in a responsible manner. Letting your pet produce offspring that you have no intention of keeping is teaching your children irresponsibility. Anyone who has seen an animal euthanized in a shelter for lack of a home knows the truth behind this dangerous myth.

For information  
on low-cost spay/  
neutering, go to:  
[www.spay.org](http://www.spay.org) or  
[www.spayusa.org](http://www.spayusa.org).

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