



HUMANE SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL

Celebrating Animals | Confronting Cruelty
Worldwide

Why Spay/Neuter is Important

The implementation of sustainable spay and neuter programs is one of the critical elements in addressing canine and feline populations that have exceeded the capacity of the local community to adequately care for them.

Reasons to spay/neuter animals

Spay/neuter benefits animals and the communities in which they live.

Spay/neuter slows population growth

Without spay and neuter initiatives, homeless animals are often euthanized, killed, neglected or die of disease or injuries. Sterilization is critical for management of free-roaming dogs and cats and related disease control concerns.

When effectively delivered and combined with vaccinations, spay/neuter provides a humane and effective way to reduce the number of animals living on the streets, and improves the health of those remaining. Sterilizing community dogs and returning them to their territories on the streets allows for a natural reduction in their population over time and leaves the most socialized dogs on the streets. We have found that the public views these sterilized and vaccinated dogs (identifiable via an ear notch or other marking) more favorably and the human-dog interaction improves.

Sterilizing pets prevents them from contributing to the problem of homeless or abandoned dogs and cats.

Spay/neuter curbs undesirable hormone-related behaviors

Females no longer have a heat cycle; this eliminates the attraction and approach of unwanted attention by male dogs.

Roaming is greatly reduced; male dogs, especially those used for security, are less likely to wander off an owner's property if they do not have the hormone drive to pursue a female in

heat. This way, they can better serve as watchdogs, may not need to be tied up, and are less likely to contract disease or suffer injury. Neutered dogs may actually be more protective, as they no longer are distracted by the temptations of breeding with females or fighting with other males

Spraying and marking territory in males is reduced.

Spay/neuter reduces health risks for the animals themselves

There are a number of potentially fatal health conditions and transmissible diseases that animals can contract or develop as a result of being intact and breeding; for example, pyometra, TVT, and reproductive cancers. These risks are eliminated when the animal is spayed or neutered.

On the whole, animals who have been sterilized at an early age tend to live longer, healthier lives, potentially increasing their lifespans by an average of one to three years for dogs, and three to five years for cats.

Spay/neuter is cost effective

By spaying or neutering your pet, you save the cost of caring for future litters and reduce the likelihood of your pet needing veterinary treatment for injuries occurring when roaming or fighting.

Myths

Here is the truth behind some common myths about spaying and neutering.

Myth: My pet needs to have a litter/one heat before sterilization.

Fact: Medical evidence indicates just the opposite. In fact, the evidence shows that females spayed before their first heat are typically healthier.

Myth: It's not natural to spay/neuter and will upset my dog or cat.

Fact: The domestication of animals removed them from the "natural order" and placed responsibility for their care with humans. Applying human emotions to animals is neither realistic nor applicable when it comes to identifying a need for sterilization.

Myth: I want my dog to be protective.

Fact: It is 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 do not want my male dog or cat to feel like less of a male.

Fact: Pets do not have any concept of sexual identity or ego. Neutering will not change a pet's basic personality. He does not suffer any kind of emotional reaction or identity crisis when neutered.

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 do not give them enough exercise.

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

Fact: Your pet's puppies or kittens have little chance of being an exact copy of your pet. Even professional breeders cannot make this guarantee. There are homeless pets waiting for homes who are just as cute, smart, sweet, and loving as your own.

More facts

Euthanasia rates increase exponentially in areas where there are no viable spay/neuter programs readily available.

Dogs are 15 times, and cats are 45 times, as prolific as humans.

Dogs and cats enjoy many behavioral and health benefits from surgical sterilization.