

SPAYING/NEUTERING YOUR PET

What Is Spaying and Neutering? Spaying and neutering are surgical procedures performed by our veterinarians that render dogs and cats incapable of breeding by removing their reproductive organs. When a female dog or cat is spayed (also called an ovariectomy), the ovaries, fallopian tubes and uterus are removed. Neutering refers to the complete removal of the testicles.

What Are the Health Benefits of Spaying and Neutering?

Spayed females will not be at risk for ovarian or uterine tumors. Neutered males will not get testicular cancer and they will have a decreased chance of developing prostate enlargement. By neutering male dogs, you lessen their desire to roam, thus decreasing their risk for injury and transmission of infectious disease. Neutered cats are much less likely to fight or spray.

Why Should I Spay or Neuter My Pet?

In addition to the *many* health benefits, spaying or neutering your pet ensures that he or she won't contribute to the pet overpopulation problem. Even an intact dog that lives primarily indoors may escape or break away from a leash on a walk and could mate and produce puppies. Each year, millions of homeless animals are euthanized or end up in shelters simply due to a lack of good homes.

What Are Some Behavioral Issues Associated with Dogs Who Aren't Spayed or Neutered?

Both male and female dogs will show general behavior signs such as howling, barking and urine marking. There is also a strong need to roam and find a mate, often leading to fighting. If spaying/neutering happens after these behaviors have become a "habit", they may continue even after the surgery. This is why it is important to spay/neuter your animal earlier than later.

When Is the Best Time to Spay or Neuter My Pet?

It is generally considered safe for puppies and kittens as young as eight weeks of age to be spayed or neutered. In animal shelters, surgery is often performed at this age so that they can be sterilized prior to adoption. In an effort to avoid the start of urine marking in male dogs, spraying in male cats, and eliminate the chance of pregnancy, it's advisable to schedule the surgery by the time your pet reaches 6 months of age. It's possible to spay a female dog while she's in heat, but not recommended, since she may be susceptible to increased blood loss and there are additional risks and costs associated with doing so. Though older dogs can be good candidates for alter surgery, our veterinarians will best determine if the procedure can safely be performed. Please check with us about the best time to spay or neuter your pet if you are unsure.

What Happens When My Pet Is Spayed or Neutered? Will He or She Act Differently?

After the procedure, your pet may be less likely to exhibit certain behaviors, but his or her personality will not change. Spayed and neutered animals may be predisposed to weight gain, but proper body condition can be maintained with appropriate diet and exercise. Our veterinarians can help you choose a proper diet for your dog. Often times the role of hormones in preventing obesity is misunderstood. Obesity is caused by poor diet and lack of physical activity and can be controlled or completely avoided by regulating your pet's caloric intake.

How Do I Prepare My Pet for Surgery?

You need to *avoid giving your dog or cat any food after 10:00pm the night before surgery (they can have water)*. A diabetic animal, however, needs adequate nutrition, and we may advise that food not be withheld, which is decided on an individual basis by our veterinarians. If your pet is diabetic, has any chronic or acute medical conditions, or is on any medications, please be sure to discuss this with our Veterinarians before scheduling the surgery. They will advise you on proper preparation for your pet's specific needs.

*** If you have any questions or concerns relating to the process of spaying/neutering your pet, please ask our veterinary staff at your next office visit or call us: Monday-Friday, 8am to 5pm, at 215-232-0831.**