

## Why Spay or Neuter?

*This low-cost surgery offers you and your pet many, many advantages.*

### **Peace of Mind**

*Did you know that a spayed or neutered (sterilized) animal is better behaved?*

Males - Neutered cats and dogs focus their attention on their human families, whereas unsterilized, unsupervised males roam in search of a mate, risking injury in traffic and in fights with other males. They mark 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, they yowl and urinate more frequently-sometimes all over the house- advertising for mates. Often, they attract unneutered males who spray urine around the females' home. Female dogs also attract males from great distances. Female dogs generally have a bloody discharge for about a week, and can conceive for another week or so.

### **Good Medicine**

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

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.

Neutering a male cat or dog by six months of age prevents testicular cancer, prostate disease and hernias. Spaying a female cat or dog helps prevent pyometra (a pus-filled uterus) and breast cancer; having this done before the first heat offers the best protection from these diseases. Treatment of pyometra requires hospitalization, intravenous (IV) fluids, antibiotics and spaying. Breast cancer can be fatal in about 50 percent of female dogs and 90 percent of female cats. With an older, seriously ill animal, anesthesia and surgery are complicated and costly.

### **Responsible Care**

*Did you know that you can help prevent the suffering and death of millions of animals?*

Almost everyone loves puppies and kittens, but some people lose interest when these animals grow up. As a result, millions of cats and dogs of all ages and breeds are euthanized annually or suffer as strays. Many of these were 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.

### **Just the Facts, Please**

Myth - A 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 are practicing perfectly safe early sterilization. The likelihood of developing mammary tumors or uterine infections increases the longer a female goes unspayed. In fact, a female spayed before sexual maturity (six to nine

months of age) has one-seventh the risk of an intact female of developing mammary cancer.

Myth - Spaying or neutering (sterilization) will alter my pet's personality.

Fact - Any slight changes will be positive. Regardless of the age when spayed or neutered, your pet will remain a caring, loving and protective companion. Neutering will reduce the need to breed, and that has a calming effect on many animals. Both neutered male canines and felines tend to stop roaming and fighting and 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. Neutering is good for your pet, since 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 - Children should 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 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.

Many states and counties have established low-cost spay/neuter programs that make the surgery affordable. Many cities also offer reduced licensing fees for owners of spayed and neutered pets. To find a low-cost program near you, call your local humane society or animal shelter.

# **Ovariohysterectomy in Female Dogs and Cats (Spay)**

## **General information**

Ovariohysterectomy is the medical term for spaying a female dog or cat. The procedure consists of surgical removal of the ovaries and uterus. If the ovaries are not removed, the bothersome heat periods still occur even though pregnancy is impossible. Surgery can be performed at 12 weeks and up.

Though it is routinely performed, spaying is major abdominal surgery requiring general anesthesia and sterile operating technique.

Prevention of pregnancy and heat periods is the main reason for the surgery, but the procedure is often necessary in treating severe uterine infections, ovarian and/or uterine tumors, and some skin disorders.

## **What are the advantages:**

There will be no more heat periods

There will be no unwanted puppies or kittens

The uterine infections common in older animals rarely occur

Mammary gland cancer seldom develops in animals spayed before their first heat

## **Frequently asked questions:**

1. Will it make my dog or cat fat and lazy? No. Obesity is due to excessive calorie intake. Weight can be controlled by proper feeding and exercise

2. Will it change her personality, disposition or intelligence? No. Dog and cat's personalities do not fully develop until 1-2 years of age. If there is a personality change in an animal spayed at a young age, it would have occurred without surgery.

3. Shouldn't my dog or cat have a litter first? No. There is no advantage in allowing your dog or cat to have a litter of puppies or kittens

## **IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE AND AFTER SURGERY**

Do not feed your dog or cat after 9:00 pm the evening before surgery

Restrict your dog or cats activity for 7-10 days after surgery

Check your pet's incision site daily until it is fully healed (usually about 2 weeks)

Keep your pet in a clean and dry area until the incision site is healed

Make sure your pet is eating and drinking properly in the days after the surgery

Make sure your pet does not lick or bother the incision site

## **Castration in Dogs and Cats (Neutering)**

### **General information**

Castration or neutering is the surgical removal of the testicles. Such surgery is performed to eliminate sexual activities and render the dog sterile. Castration usually reduces a dog's tendency to roam and fight. It also helps with housetraining problems. The general level of aggression may also be reduced. However; castration is not a replacement for obedience training by the owner. Surgery can be performed at 12 weeks of age and up.

In older dogs, neutering may be necessary due to diseases of the testicles or prostate gland.

Though this is a routine surgery, there are always risks when an animal is under anesthesia.

Recovery is generally uneventful and the aftercare is minimal.

### **Home Care**

Do not feed your dog or cat after 9:00 pm the evening before surgery

Restrict your dog or cats activity for 7-10 days after surgery

Check your pet's incision site daily until it is fully healed (usually about 2 weeks)

Keep your pet in a clean and dry area until the incision site is healed

Make sure your pet is eating and drinking properly in the days after the surgery

Make sure your pet does not lick or bother the incision site