



Frequently Asked Questions on Spaying & Neutering

What is spaying and neutering? Spaying is the surgical process whereby a female animal (cat, dog or rabbit) is altered so that they cannot bear offspring. Neutering is this same process except done in male animals (cats, dogs or rabbits) to prevent them from impregnating a female.

When should I spay or neuter my animal? Many veterinarians suggest that you spay or neuter your pet after it has reached 12 weeks of age. In females, it is recommended to spay your cat or dog before it goes into its first heat cycle (which can occur as early as 4 months in some animals). Please consult with your veterinarian on the appropriate time for spaying/neutering your pet.

Won't spaying or neutering my animal change its personality? No. The only behavior changes you'll see are positive ones. Spayed or neutered animals make better companions and are more affectionate. Males are less likely to roam or get in fights, and they tend to stop spraying if neutered young.

Why shouldn't my cat or dog have just one litter? Motherhood will not make your pet healthier or happier. In fact, early spaying and neutering greatly reduces health problems. Your pet can be spayed if she is in heat or pregnant, but it is best to spay early (12 to 16 weeks).

But what if I plan to find homes for the kittens or puppies? Finding good homes for kittens and puppies is not easy. Many animals are discarded once they start to grow and many will produce surplus babies of their own. The pet overpopulation crisis is perpetuated one litter at a time.

Won't my pet become fat and lazy? Lack of exercise and overfeeding of an animal causes obesity. Make time for walks and play, and ask your veterinarian about reducing calories, if necessary.

But what if I want my children to see the miracle of birth? Are you willing to explain to your children the tragedy of death caused by allowing yet another surplus litter to be born? What's more, most animals go off by themselves to give birth. You are likely to find out about the "miracle of birth" after it has already happened. Your local library can be a great resource for videos to help teach your children about the wonders of nature.

Won't my dog lose its protective instinct? No. Spaying and neutering does not affect a dog's natural instinct to protect home and family.

Why should I neuter my male, he's not the one having litters? Male pets can father many offspring. This makes your pet equally responsible for pet overpopulation. Neutering your male will make him less likely to roam to look for a mate.

Won't my male pet feel deprived or less masculine if he is altered? Don't confuse human sexuality with a dog or cat's hormonal instincts. Neutering won't cause any negative emotional reaction or identity crisis and you'll help prevent prostate and testicular diseases in your pet.

Is it still necessary to spay/neuter my pet if they are indoor pets only? Yes. Many pet owners think only about the reproductive consequences of not altering their animals. However, there are many health and behavioral repercussions as well. Studies have shown that unaltered males are more susceptible to prostate and testicular cancer and other diseases - whereas spaying your female can eliminate prospects of uterine and ovarian cancer and pyometra (a life threatening illness in female dogs). Unaltered animals may also display more aggressive behavioral characteristics.

Isn't it too expensive to have my pet spayed or neutered? There are many veterinarians who offer low-cost spay and neuter services. The surgery is a one-time cost and is a small price to pay for the health of your pet and the prevention of more homeless animals.

Even with low-cost veterinary services some people still cannot afford to spay or neuter their pets. That's where our Spay/Neuter Assistance Program can help... please call (916) 782-7722, x. 201 to learn how you can get assistance with spaying/neutering your pet.

Still not sure you need to spay or neuter your animals? Here are a couple things to consider:

*Animal shelters across the nation are forced to **kill** an estimated **4.5 million** dogs and cats **every year**, most of which are **young and healthy**.*

A single pair of cats and their kittens can produce as many as 420,000 kittens in just seven years!

Please, do your part: spay or neuter your pets.