

MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT SPAYING AND NEUTERING

MYTH: *My pet will get lazy and fat.*

FACT: As pet's age their metabolism slows down regardless of whether they are spayed or neutered. The truth is that pets may get lazy and fat because their owners feed them too much and they don't get enough exercise.

MYTH: *It's better to have one litter first.*

FACT: Medical evidence indicates just the opposite. It has been proven in scientific studies that spaying a female before her first heat practically eliminates her risk of mammary cancer. This benefit is lost after her second heat has passed. Furthermore, her personality is determined by genetics and environment, not whether or not she has a litter.

MYTH: *My children should experience the miracle of birth.*

FACT: Even if children are able to see a pet give birth— which is unlikely, since it usually occurs at night and in seclusion— the lesson they will really learn is that animals can be created and discarded as it suits adults. Instead, it should be explained to children that the real miracle is life and that preventing the birth of some pets can save the lives of others.

MYTH: *But my pet is a purebred.*

FACT: So is at least one out of every four pets brought to animal shelters around the country. There are just too many dogs and cats— mixed breed and purebred.

MYTH: *I want my dog to be protective.*

FACT: Spaying or neutering does not affect 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 don't want my male dog or cat to feel like less of a male.*

FACT: Pet's don't have any concept of sexual identity or ego. Neutering will not change a pet's basic personality. He doesn't suffer any kind of emotional reaction or identity crisis when neutered.

MYTH: *But my dog or cat is so special, I want a puppy or kitten just like her.*

FACT: The offspring of a pet will not be a carbon copy. In fact, an entire litter of puppies or kittens might receive all of a pet's worst characteristics.

MYTH: *It's too expensive to have my pet spayed or neutered.*

FACT: The cost depends on the sex, size, and age of your pet. It's a relatively small cost when compared to all of the benefits. It's a bargain compared to the cost of having a litter and ensuring the health of the mother and litter; two months of pregnancy and another two months until the litter is weaned can add up to significant veterinary bills and food costs. Cesarean sections, if needed run, about \$500-\$1000 and lives are at risk. Also, most dog fight and hit by car cases are not spayed or neutered (they have more of a tendency to roam and be aggressive) and these can be extremely expensive.

MYTH: *I'll find good homes for the puppies and kittens.*

FACT: You may find homes, but each one you find means one less for the dogs and cats in shelters who need good homes. Also, in less than one year's time, each of your pet's offspring may have a litter, adding more animals to the population. The problem of pet overpopulation is perpetuated one litter at a time.

SPAYING AND NEUTERING

What is involved?

These operations require a one day stay at the hospital. Typically, patients are dropped off between 7:00-8:30am and discharged between 3:30-6:00pm. We ask that you call between 1:00-2:00pm to receive a discharge time. A technician or the doctor will review the discharge instructions with you. Females are spayed by removing their ovaries and uterus (ovariohysterectomy) and males are neutered by removing their testicles (orchietomy).

Healthy, young animals have minimal risk. Each one receives a physical examination prior to anesthesia. Isoflurane inhalant gas anesthesia is used. Cardiac and blood oxygen monitoring is performed during surgery. Sterile instruments and drapes are used for each pet. Injectable pain medication is used on each pet. We treat each pet on an individual basis and strive to provide the highest standards of care.

Spaying or Neutering is good for your Pet

- Spaying greatly reduces the incidence of mammary (breast) cancer. This benefit is greatest when spayed before her first heat cycle.
- Chances of a uterine infection (pyometra) or ovarian/uterine cancer are eliminated. These can be life-threatening.
- Neutering eliminates testicular cancer and decreases the incidence of prostate disease.
- Unsterilized cats are more likely to fight with other cats and contract feline leukemia virus or feline aids virus (which are incurable).
- Spaying does make for a calmer cat. You won't have to deal with incessant heat cycles and tomcats congregating around your house.

Spaying or Neutering is good for You

- Neutering makes male cats less likely to spray and cause unpleasant odor in your house.
- Spaying eliminates heat cycles, which can last 6-14 days, often twice a year, in dogs, and an average of 7-10 days, three or more times a year, in cats. Females in heat cry incessantly, may show nervous behavior, and attract unwanted male animals.
- Unsterilized animals often exhibit more behavior and temperament problems than do those who have been spayed or neutered. Interdog aggression, territorial aggression and dominance aggression are seen more in unsterilized animals.
- Spaying and neutering makes pets less likely to bite.
- Spaying and neutering makes pets less likely to roam, run away, and get into fights.
- It is better to spay or neuter before unwanted habits develop.
- Complications from pregnancy (C-sections, etc) can be very expensive, up to \$1000 or more. Other illnesses related to the reproductive tract may be expensive to treat.

Spaying and Neutering are good for the Community

- Communities spend millions of dollars to control unwanted animals.
- Irresponsible breeding contributes to the problem of dog bites and attacks.
- Lee County Animal Services euthanizes dozens of dogs and cats each week.
- More than 12 million dogs and cats are euthanized every year across the country.