ASPCA® ASPCA®

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.

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
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