

"It's too expensive to have my pet spayed or neutered".

The cost for spaying and neutering depends on the sex of the animal, it's size and age, some veterinarians offer discounts for special circumstances. But whatever the actual price, spay or neuter surgery is a one time cost and relatively small when you think of the benefits. It's also a small price to pay for the health of your pet and to prevent more unwanted animals.

WHAT DO "SPAY" AND "NEUTER" REALLY MEAN?

Your veterinarian can fully explain spay and neuter procedures to you and discuss with you the best age at which to desex your pet. Basically, female dogs and cats are "spayed" by removing their reproductive organs, and male dogs and cats are "neutered" by removing both testicles. In both cases, an operation is performed while the animal is under anaesthesia. Sometimes the pet can go home the same day, and other times a stay at your veterinarian is required. Depending upon the procedure, your pet may need stitches removed after a few days.

IF MY PET IS DESEXED, DOES THAT MAKE ME A RESPONSIBLE PET OWNER?

YES, it certainly helps. Desexing is an important part of being a responsible owner, but responsible pet ownership also means providing adequate food, water and proper veterinary care; obeying the leash and registration laws in your community; and giving your pet the love, companionship, exercise and attention it needs.



Pet Adoption and the Overpopulation Problem

Each one of us can help stop the tragedy of too many pets by taking three simple steps:

- 1** Adopt your next companion animal from a pound so no more healthy animals have to die simply because there aren't enough homes for them all.
- 2** Have all of your pets spayed or neutered. Preventing more unnecessary births is critical to breaking the overpopulation cycle.
- 3** Be a responsible pet owner. Don't let your pets roam free and protect them with current registration tags.

HOW YOU CAN "Be a P.A.L." TO YOUR PET

- **Prevent A Litter.** Spay or Neuter your pet.
- **Provide a Leash.** Don't allow your dog to run loose, and keep your cat inside.
- **Purchase a Licence.** Register your dog. If your pet gets lost, identification can be it's ticket home.
- **Pet A Lot.** Your pet needs *you*. Of course, you must provide good food, water, shelter and veterinary care - but that's not enough. Your dog or cat needs your affection, your attention, your time and your companionship.

If you're thinking about adding a pet to your family, make sure you've thought about all the responsibilities as well as the benefits, then visit your local pound. There are hundreds of dogs out there, just waiting for a PAL like you.

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WHAT DOES PET OVERPOPULATION HAVE DO DO WITH ME?

Just about everything. It's hard to imagine that letting your pet have one - or even two - litters causes a problem, especially if you find homes for most of the puppies or kittens. But the fact is that "just one litter" does cause pet overpopulation. In less than a year, all of the little ones in your pet's litter could be having litters of their own. Everyday, hundreds of healthy puppies and kittens must be destroyed - and each one of those hundreds came from "just one litter".

PREVENT A LITTER

WHEN THERE'S JUST TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING...

There's a problem. In the case of dogs and cats, it's a problem of pet overpopulation. Each year, thousands of dogs and cats, puppies and kittens, are turned in to animal shelters and pounds around the country. Some are lost, some are abandoned, some are unwanted, most are the result of irresponsible ownership and uncontrolled breeding. Sadly hundreds of those animals have to be euthanased because there aren't enough good homes for all of them.

PET OVERPOPULATION IS A PROBLEM YOU CAN HELP SOLVE...

by being a responsible pet owner, as well as a caring and concerned citizen. here are some of the things you can do:

Prevent a litter by having your pet spayed or neutered.

Don't let your pet run loose. Keeping your pet at home can help prevent unwanted breeding and protect your pet from getting lost or stolen.

Spread the "Be a P.A.L. - Prevent A Litter" message to friends, family, neighbours, organisations, and so on. People must become aware of the problem before they can be expected to help with the solutions. (For more information contact your local Animal Control Department).

PREVENT A LITTER - IT'S GOOD FOR YOUR PET

Spayed and neutered dogs and cats live longer, healthier lives.

Spaying female dogs and cats eliminates the possibility of uterine and ovarian cancer and greatly reduces the incidence of breast cancer.

Neutering male dogs and cats reduces the incidence of prostate cancer.

Neutered animals are less likely to roam and fight.

PREVENT A LITTER - IT'S GOOD FOR YOU

Spayed and neutered pets are better, more affectionate companions.

Neutered cats are less likely to spray and mark territory.

Spaying a female dog or cat eliminates it's heat cycle, which can last twenty-one days, twice a year, in dogs, and anywhere from three to fifteen days, three or more times a year in cats. Females in heat often cry incessantly, show nervous behaviour, attract unwanted male animals.

Spayed and neutered pets are less likely to bite. Unaltered animals often exhibit more behaviour and temperament problems than those that have been spayed or neutered.

PREVENT A LITTER - IT'S GOOD FOR THE COMMUNITY

Communities spend thousands of dollars to control and eliminate unwanted animals. Irresponsible breeding contributes to the problem of dog bites and attacks. Animal Pounds are overburdened with surplus animals. Some communities have developed and implemented good programmes that work to promote pet desexing and responsible pet ownership. Such programmes may include low-cost spay / neuter options, higher licence fees for unaltered animals, and public education. In Los Angeles, one such programme reduced the number of cats and dogs handled by city animal Pounds from 145,000 to 81,000 in just ten years.

SPAY AND NEUTERED: EXCUSES, MYTHS...AND FACTS

"My pet will get fat and lazy".

The truth is that pets get fat and lazy if their owners feed them too much and don't give them enough exercise.

"It's better to have one litter first".

There is no medical evidence that having a litter is good for your pet. In fact, the evidence indicates that females spayed before their first heat, at about six months, are healthier. Males can be neutered from about six months on. It's a good idea to check with your veterinarian about your own animals.

"But my pet is purebred".

So are at least one-fourth of the animals brought to animal pounds around the country. There are just too many dogs and cats - crossbred and purebred.

"I'll find good homes for all the puppies and kittens".

The fact that pounds have to euthanase about 80 percent of the animals they take in indicates that there are not enough homes to go around. Even if you could find homes for the litter your pet produces, those are homes that will no longer be available for any of the millions of animals already born.

"I want my dog to be protective".

Spaying or neutering does not affect a dog's natural instincts to protect its home and family.

"My children should experience the miracle of birth"

Even if your children are able to see your pet give birth - which is unlikely, since it usually occurs at night and in seclusion - the lesson you will really be teaching is that animals can be created and discarded as it suits us. Instead, you should explain to your children that the real miracle is life, and that preventing births of some pets can save the lives of others.

"But my dog (or cat) is so special, and I want a pup (or kitten) just like her".

Your dog or cat may be a great pet. But that doesn't mean you'll get a carbon copy. Professional animal breeders who follow generations of blood lines can't guarantee they will get just what they want out of a particular litter. Your chances are even slimmer. In fact, you could get an entire litter of puppies and kittens with all of your pet's (and it's mates) worst characteristics.

