



COUNCIL BLUFFS VETERINARY CLINIC

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## FACTS ABOUT SPAYING YOUR FEMALE PET

“Ovariohysterectomy” is the medical term for the operation commonly known as “spaying,” and consists of the surgical removal of the ovaries and uterus of your pet. By having this surgery done, you not only prevent unwanted pregnancy, but virtually eliminate several health risks, namely mammary tumors (if done prior to the first heat) and pyometra (life-threatening uterine infection).

Pets do not need to go through a heat cycle before being spayed. The surgery is generally less complicated, with a faster recovery if done before the first heat. To reflect this, Council Bluffs Veterinary Clinic charges less to spay an animal before her first heat cycle than after she has been in heat.

This does not mean that there is no benefit to spaying a pet even after several heat cycles. The main medical reason for spaying a pet before her first heat cycle is that you will have nearly eliminated the possibility of her developing mammary cancer later in life. About 1 in 200 pets spayed before their first heat will develop mammary cancer; after the first heat this chance increases to 1 in 12; after the second & subsequent cycles, this chance increases to 1 in 4. Even if she is spayed later, you will completely eliminate the chance that she will get ovarian cancer or a severe uterine infection called a *pyometra*. A pyometra is a medical emergency and is common in older dogs (and cats) that have not been spayed. The only effective treatment for a pyometra is to spay the pet (a difficult, delicate and expensive surgery), otherwise this condition is virtually always fatal.

Some people believe that spaying will make their pet fat. While the metabolism is slowed somewhat after spaying, weight gain can be prevented by simply feeding less food. This has the additional advantage of saving you money on pet food bills.

Having your pet spayed will also reduce the amount of money spent on city and county license fees, since the fee is reduced for spayed pets.

Because she will not have the hormone swings and frustrations associated with heat cycles or cystic ovaries, your pet’s temperament should be steadier. Spaying is unlikely to make a mean pet sweet, a shy pet bold, or anything so drastic as that, but it may help to settle a nervous pet and allow her to concentrate more fully on the lessons you teach her, thus making her easier to work with.

The other reason to have your pet spayed is because accidental breedings have resulted in a pet population surplus that results in THOUSANDS of puppies and pets being killed in shelters every year.

There are certain risks associated with any surgery, but there are far more associated with having your pet remain unspayed.

## FACTS ABOUT NEUTERING YOUR MALE DOG

“Orchiectomy” (also called neutering or castration) is the correct term for the surgical procedure done to prevent your male dog from reproducing. While many responsible dog owners have their females spayed, far too few seem to realize the importance of having their males neutered.

From the medical standpoint there are many problems in older male dogs that can be easily prevented if he has been neutered. If one of the testicles has not descended into the scrotum (a genetic disorder known as cryptorchidism), he would stand a much higher chance than normal of developing several different testicular tumors. Additionally, cryptorchidism is a genetic trait, which means that any male descendant of a cryptorchid animal, or the sons of his female descendants, are at drastically increased risk of being cryptorchid themselves. Furthermore, unneutered male dogs are at much higher risk of developing perianal adenomas, which are a kind of tumor located next to the anus that can grow very large, are unsightly, and have a good chance of becoming very painfully infected as well as interfering with defecation. Prostate infections, enlargements and tumors are very common in older, intact male dogs and are often very painful for him, causing him to have to strain painfully in order to pass even a small amount of urine and, if it becomes large enough, interfering with defecation as well. Prostate problems are also quite preventable by having your dog neutered early in life.

It is important to neuter your dog from a behavioral standpoint as well. Females are sexually active only twice a year, but males are capable of breeding all year long. A responsible dog owner certainly would not allow his dog to run loose, however a male does not have to see a bitch in heat to get aroused. His nose is so sensitive that he can smell a female in heat many blocks away. You can NOT teach your dog to control his mating instincts. Even when you have him securely confined to a pen or chained in his own backyard, he will try repeatedly to get loose, dig out, climb over, or do whatever he can to find a way out, sometimes even injuring himself in his quest to find his mate. Once he does escape, all the perils that kill so many strays can now affect your dog; he could easily be hit by a car, exposed to diseases and parasites, get in a fight or even get shot all while trying to mate with a bitch in season.

Neutering your male dog before he becomes sexually mature, which happens at about 8 or 9 months of age, may make him easier to train and will make him less predisposed to inappropriate levels of aggression but will NOT reduce his protective instincts. A neutered male will be less likely to try to dominate you, which your dog may demonstrate by trying to mount you or becoming aggressive toward you. A neutered dog is healthier, happier and if he is not allowed to breed before he's neutered he will not have added to the dog population surplus that results in THOUSANDS of puppies and dogs being killed in shelters every year.

Neutering your dog will also make him a more efficient eater, saving you money on his feed bill since he will not need as much food to stay in good shape. (This is related to the myth about neutered dogs becoming fat: neutering your dog will NOT make him fat; overfeeding will make your dog fat.) Neutering will also reduce your dog license fees, since Council Bluffs (and surrounding areas) charges less to license a neutered dog than an intact dog.

If you have any questions or concerns, call and ask doctors at the Council Bluffs Veterinary clinic at 323-2147. We are open 8-6 Monday through Friday, 8-1 on Saturdays.