

## SOMETIMES THERE'S JUST TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING . . .

then there's a problem. In the case of dogs and cats, it's the problem of pet overpopulation. Each year, more than 12,000,000 dogs, cats, puppies, and kittens are left at animal shelters around the country. Some are lost, some are abandoned, some are unwanted, most are the result of irresponsible pet ownership. Sadly, nearly 8,000,000 of those animals have to be euthanized because there aren't enough homes for them all.

Consider these facts:

- In six short years, one female dog and its offspring can be the source of 67,000 puppies.
- In just seven years, one female cat and its young can produce 420,000 cats.
- Every day in the United States, more than 70,000 puppies and kittens are born. When this number is compared to the 10,000 human births each day, it's clear that there can *never* be enough homes for all these pets. But don't look at it as just a problem of numbers—every single pet is an individual life.



Your veterinarian can fully explain spay and neuter procedures to you and discuss the best age at which to sterilize your pet.



Sometimes a spayed or neutered pet can go home the same day as the surgery; other times a stay at your veterinarian's office may be needed.

## WHAT DOES PET-OVERPOPULATION HAVE TO 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. Every day, thousands of healthy puppies and kittens must be destroyed—and each one of those thousands came from “just one litter.”

## PET OVERPOPULATION IS A PROBLEM YOU CAN HELP SOLVE

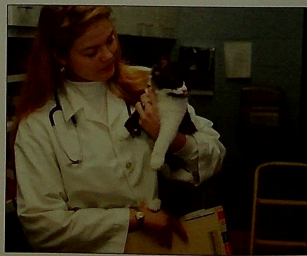
Fortunately, there *is* a solution to pet overpopulation. It's a routine surgical procedure for your pet called spaying or neutering. Being a responsible pet owner means making this important choice for your pet—a choice that saves lives. Talk to your veterinarian about spaying and neutering. Prevent a litter and be a part of the solution to the tragedy of pet overpopulation.

## 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 sterilize your pet. Basically, female dogs and cats are “spayed” by removing their reproductive organs, and male dogs and cats are “neutered” by removing their testicles. In dogs, an operation is performed while the animal is under anesthesia. Sometimes the cat is spayed 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.

## PREVENT A LITTER: IT'S GOOD FOR YOUR PET

- Spayed and neutered dogs and cats live longer, healthier lives.
- Spaying and neutering can eliminate or reduce the incidence of a number of health problems that can be very difficult or expensive to treat.
- Spaying female dogs and cats eliminates the



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- possibility of uterine or ovarian cancer and greatly reduces the incidence of breast cancer, particularly when your pet is spayed before the first estrous cycle.
- Neutering male dogs reduces the incidence of prostate cancer and prostate disorders.

## 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 its heat cycle. Estrus lasts an average of six to twelve days, often twice a year, in dogs, and an average of six to seven days, three or more times a year, in cats. Females in heat can cry incessantly, show nervous behavior, and attract unwanted male animals.
- Spayed and neutered pets are less likely to bite. Unaltered animals often exhibit more behavior and temperament problems than do those that have been spayed or neutered.
- Neutered males are less likely to roam the neighborhood, run away, or get into fights.

## PREVENT A LITTER: IT'S GOOD FOR THE COMMUNITY

Communities spend millions of dollars to control and eliminate unwanted animals. Irresponsible breeding contributes to the problem of dog bites and attacks. Animal shelters are overburdened with surplus animals. Stray pets and homeless animals get into trash containers, defecate in public areas or on private lawns, and frighten or anger citizens who lack the understanding of their misery or needs. Some of these animals also scare away or kill birds and wildlife.

## SPAY AND NEUTER: EXERCISES, MYTHS . . . AND FACTS

"My pet will get fat and lazy." The truth is that most pets get fat and lazy because their owners feed them too much and don't give them enough exercise.

"It's better to have one litter first." Medical evidence indicates just the opposite. In fact, the evidence shows that females spayed before their first heat



Spay or neuter surgery is a one-time cost that is relatively small when compared to the benefits. It's a small price to pay for the health of your pet and the prevention of more unwanted animals.

are typically healthier. Check with your veterinarian about the appropriate time for these procedures.

"But my pet is a purebred." So is at least one out of every four animals brought to animal shelters around the country. There are just too many dogs and cats—mixed breed *and* purebred.

"I want my dog to be protective." Spaying and neutering does not affect a dog's natural instincts to protect its home and family. A dog's personality is formed more by genetics and environment than by its sex hormones.

"I don't want my male dog or cat to feel like less of a male." Pets don't have any concept of sexual identity or ego. Neutering a male dog or cat will not change its basic personality. It doesn't suffer any kind of emotional reaction or identity crisis when neutered.

"It's too expensive to have my pet spayed or neutered." The cost of spaying and neutering depends on the sex, size, and age of the animal, your veterinarian's fees, and a number of other variables. But whatever the actual price, spay or neuter surgery is a one-time cost and relatively small when compared to all the benefits. It's also 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, not to mention the added financial and health costs if complications develop. Most importantly, it's a very small price to pay for the health of your pet and the prevention of more unwanted animals.

"I'll find good homes for all the puppies and kittens." You may find homes for all, or at least most, of your pet's litter. What you may not think about is that, in less than one year's time, *each and every one* of your pet's litter may have produced its own litter, adding more and more animals to the population. The problem of pet overpopulation is made and perpetuated one litter at a time.

Just One Litter . . .



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Cover photograph: The Terra Wild studio