







Millions of unwanted dogs and cats are euthanized each year in our country's animal shelters.

Many are perfectly healthy, adoptable animals for whom no home was found. Some are euthanized simply because they were born. Millions more never make it to animal shelters and die from accidents, starvation, and disease. To stop these deaths, we need to stop cats and dogs from having kittens and puppies. By spaying and neutering your companion animal, you can stop the cycle of unwanted animals.

What Can You Do?

-  If your animals are not spayed or neutered, contact your veterinarian or local animal shelter immediately to learn about services in your community.
-  Inform family and friends of your decision to spay or neuter your animals and encourage them to make the same choice for theirs.
-  Support low-cost spay/neuter programs with your time, talent, and money.
-  Order copies of this brochure to put in public places, animal shelters, and veterinary offices in your community.

**Thank you
for caring!**



Contact Us.

P.O. Box 340
Charles Town, WV 25414-0340
(304) 725-0506

Learn More.

www.nhes.org

Like Us.

 TheNHES

ADVANTAGES OF SPAYING AND NEUTERING

**Your
Companion
Animal**





The Procedure

Spaying and neutering are relatively safe and painless operations performed by licensed veterinarians. The cost of the surgery depends on the age, size, sex, and health of the animal. Many communities have low-cost clinics. Contact your local animal shelter for help in locating spay/neuter clinics in your area.

Spaying, the procedure used for females, removes the animal's uterus and ovaries, therefore eliminating the heat cycle or "estrus." Dogs can go into heat for approximately 21 days twice a year; cats can go into heat between 3-15 days as many as three times a year. Neutering is the procedure in which the testicles are removed from a male animal.

Many veterinarians now safely and routinely perform spay and neuter surgeries on kittens and puppies as young as 6-8 weeks of age so long as they are at least 2 pounds. Healthy puppies and kittens who meet the age and weight requirements tolerate the procedures well and recover more quickly than older animals.

ADVANTAGES



Spayed and neutered dogs and cats are likely to be more content. They experience less discomfort, distress, and distraction. They tend to make better family members and may live longer than unaltered animals.



Neutering alleviates roaming behaviors associated with the male's search for a mate. Neutered animals are less likely to roam and, therefore, have a lower risk of engaging in fights, sustaining injuries, and being killed on roadways. In addition, neutered animals are less likely to develop prostate problems and testicular tumors.



Spayed animals rarely develop mammary gland tumors. They also cannot develop uterine and ovarian cancer.



When fewer animals are able to reproduce, fewer animals will lose their lives in animal shelters or on the streets because there were not enough homes for them.

Concerns

While there is an expense associated with the surgery, low-cost spay/neuter programs can often significantly reduce the cost. This is a one-time expense in your animal's life that may prevent future veterinary expenses.

Some owners are concerned their animals will gain weight following the surgery. Most animals are spayed or neutered before they reach their full weight and height. The added gain, therefore, is a result of their becoming adults and not a result of the surgery. Of course, lack of exercise and too much food will also cause an animal to gain weight.

You may think it will be easy to find homes for the offspring of your companion animal. But remember, for each puppy or kitten for whom you find a home, there are dozens of puppies and kittens awaiting adoption who may be euthanized instead. If you cannot find homes, what will you do?

Some animal owners think their female should have at least one litter. They think that somehow she will be a better animal if she does. There is no veterinary evidence to support such an idea. Others think it is okay to spay the female but that you do not have to neuter the male. Again, there are health and safety advantages to altering both males and females. Also, responsible ownership means that owners of both males and females must do their part to control the reproductive behaviors of their animals.

Even with the advent of early-age spay/neuter, some owners feel they should wait until their animal is at least 6 months old. That is risky. Your animal may go into heat before 6 months and become pregnant or be able to impregnate another animal. Early-age spay/neuter can be safely performed on puppies and kittens if they meet certain criteria. Consult your veterinarian on what is most appropriate for your animal.

