



WHAT DO THE TERMS SPAY & NEUTER MEAN?

Spay (females) and neuter (males) are surgical procedures performed by a veterinarian to prevent pets from reproducing.

Spaying consists of removing the uterus and ovaries. Neutering involves the removal of the testicles. It is possible for male cats and dogs to be vasectomised, which means they retain their testicles but cannot reproduce. "Sterilization," "fixing" and "altering" are also common terms for neuter and spay.



RODENT & RABBIT OVERPOPULATION

BC SPCA shelters often become inundated with small animals – rodents and rabbits – abandoned by inexperienced or irresponsible guardians who keep opposite-sex animals together. Within months – even weeks – a person can become overwhelmed with the offspring. If your small animal can be housed in groupings, keep only same-sex animals or spayed and neutered animals together. Most pet stores breed rodents on site to sell and often you unknowingly end up with pregnant animals.



LOOKING FOR A COMPANION?

Make the BC SPCA your first adoption option! BC SPCA adoption centres have kittens, adult and senior cats, puppies and dogs of all ages, horses and other farm animals, plus small animals such as rabbits, guinea pigs, hamsters, gerbils, pet rats and more. Vist spca.bc.ca/adopt for details.



The BC SPCA is committed to a "green" approach for environmentally friendly facilities and initiatives.



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ABOUT US

The BC SPCA is a not-for-profit animal welfare society reliant almost solely on public donations. To support the BC SPCA's work to end pet overpopulation, visit spca.bc.ca.

BCSPCA
SPEAKING FOR ANIMALS

The British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

FOR THE LOVE OF YOUR PET...



Please spay or neuter!

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THE PROBLEM? TOO MANY ANIMALS!

British Columbia has an enormous pet overpopulation problem – particularly with cats. The BC SPCA's 37 branches take in nearly 34,000 cats and kittens, dogs, rabbits and other animals each year. In addition, a vast number of companion animals are handled by other animal rescue groups and animal control agencies throughout the province.



1+1=6

Pets can't add but they sure can multiply! Assuming zero mortality, in just seven years...

- » A female dog and her offspring can produce over 4,000 dogs.
- » One unspayed cat and her offspring can produce over 450,000 cats.
- » A single female rabbit and her offspring can produce 95 billion rabbits.



THE SOLUTION?

1. Have YOUR pet spayed or neutered!
2. Encourage others to do the same.
3. Sponsor the spaying or neutering of a shelter animal with a donation. At BC SPCA shelters all cats, dogs and rabbits are spayed or neutered prior to adoption at a cost of over \$2 million a year.



THE BENEFITS OF SPAY/NEUTER

Having your pet spayed or neutered reduces pet overpopulation and benefits you and your pet in the following ways:

» Generally neutering decreases aggressive behaviours in pets. Neutered dogs are calmer and less likely to bite, attack or get into dog fights. Neutered cats don't have the drive to mark and protect their territories and are less likely to spray or get into cat fights, resulting in fewer injuries.

» Ends the heat cycle in females. Heat cycles are usually twice a year for dogs, and result in many unwanted behaviour changes including possible aggression. Cats generally go in and out of heat every three weeks between January and November. Female cats in heat can howl relentlessly, may try to escape to mate, spray or urinate inappropriately and attract unwanted male cats.

» Reduces the likelihood of pets developing uterine, ovarian and testicular cancers. Your pet may live longer and enjoy a healthier life if spayed or neutered.

» Eliminates the drive to reproduce and decreases the likelihood of your male pet wandering away or escaping. Male dogs can smell a female in heat up to a kilometre away. Once neutered, your pet will be less frustrated and become a calmer companion.

» Provides an opportunity to have other important procedures performed, as necessary, at the time of the operation such as an identification tattoo or microchip, teeth cleaning, hernia repair and baby teeth removal.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Will it hurt my pet?

No, the surgery is done under a general anaesthetic, therefore, your pet will not be in pain. Your veterinarian will also ensure your pet has post-surgery pain medication. Your pet will only experience some mild discomfort for a short time while healing occurs.

My pet is just a kitten or puppy. When should I spay or neuter her or him?

Many veterinarians now perform early spay/neuter procedures as young as eight weeks (or two pounds). To prevent your pet adding to the pet overpopulation problem, spay or neuter your cat before six months of age; and your dog before six and a half months.

Is it true that kittens can have kittens?

Yes, cats by the age of approximately four months (and dogs slightly older) begin to have heat cycles. Most unintentional litters (particularly

with cats) occur because guardians waited too long to have their pets spayed.

Shouldn't a female have one litter first?

No. Allowing a female dog or cat to have a litter does not have any appreciable benefits for the temperament of the animal. However, there are potential health risks associated with pregnancy and giving birth, which are good reasons to have the surgery.

If I neuter a male dog or cat, will he feel like less of a male?

Animals don't think of themselves as male or female. They react instinctively to reproduce based on hormones. By neutering a male pet he will not notice any difference and still be a happy, playful companion. If neutering is

a perceptual issue for you, ask your veterinarian about performing a pet vasectomy.



What is it going to cost to spay/neuter my pet?

Cost depends upon the sex and weight of your pet. For example, a large dog generally costs more than a small dog. If your pet is overweight or already pregnant, this can also add to the cost. To some the cost might seem high, but remember this is a one-time investment with life-long health and welfare benefits for your companion. Reduced risk of many cancers, calmer, more stable behaviour, and not adding to the pet overpopulation problem are all positive benefits. Veterinary clinics set their own pricing so you can shop around. If you require financial

assistance, please check with your local BC SPCA branch about low-cost spay/neuter programs in your community.

Also, consider the possible costs if you have an unwanted litter of kittens or puppies, or should your pet wander off in search of a mate and get injured (in a fight or hit by a car), the vet bill you may face will far exceed the cost of a one-time surgery.

Will it change my pet's personality?

A little, but in a positive way. Generally a pet's behaviour is calmer and more stable. For intact male dogs, who are involved in the most serious dog attacks, you will likely experience a decrease in aggressive behaviour.

Will my pet become fat and lazy once he or she is sterilized?

No. Pets become fat and lazy as a result of overeating, a lack of exercise or a medical condition.

Should I spay or neuter my rabbit?

Yes. All BC SPCA rabbits are spayed or neutered prior to adoption because of the tremendous pet rabbit overpopulation problem. Spayed or neutered rabbits are calmer and more affectionate and generally have fewer health issues.

