



Benefits of Spaying and Neutering

It is estimated, by the Humane Society of The United States, that shelters care for approximately 6-8 million animals per year. Unfortunately, 3-4 million of these animals will not be adopted and are euthanized. By spaying (female) and neutering (male) pets, the number of animals left in shelters and being euthanized every year could be greatly reduced. In addition to this fact, there are also numerous health benefits by having this surgical procedure performed on your pet.

Ovariohysterectomy, or spaying, is a surgical procedure performed on female dogs and cats that provides permanent sterilization. This is a procedure that requires minimal hospitalization and offers lifelong health benefits. It can be performed as early as eight weeks of age, however, many veterinarians prefer for animals to be 4 to 6 months or older. Spaying animals prior to the first heat cycle prevents the constant crying and pacing of female cats and the messiness associated with female dogs during their heat cycle. More importantly, early spaying can prevent the risk of breast cancer. Also, it totally prevents uterine infections as well as uterine cancer.

Castration, or neutering, is performed on male dogs and cats. By performing this procedure at an early age, many unwanted behaviors such as urine marking, aggression, and the urge to roam can be prevented. Neutered dogs and cats focus their attention on human families, whereas intact animals tend to mark their territory by spraying strong smelling urine all over the house. Also, neutered animals are less likely roam, therefore reducing the chance of being hit by a car or suffering bite wounds from other animals. As a health benefit, neutering can help prevent testicular cancer, diseases of the prostate gland, and the occurrence of perianal tumors.

Many pet owners are reluctant to have their pet spayed or neutered due to common misconceptions concerning weight gain and changes in personality. While it is a fact that many overweight animals are spayed or neutered, lack of exercise and overfeeding is generally to blame for this condition. By maintaining proper nutrition levels for the activity of the pet, the chance of weight gain after the procedure can be greatly reduced. Also, changes in behavior that occur are for the better. By preventing urine marking, male aggression and roaming tendencies, our pets will more likely become better members of our family for years to come.

Everyone is affected by animal overpopulation. Every year millions of tax dollars are spent by humane societies and animal shelters caring for sick and stray animals. Shelters do their best to place animals in loving homes, but the number of animals greatly exceeds the number of willing adopters. By choosing to have your pet spayed or neutered, not only will it provide lifelong health benefits, it will also help reduce the number of loving, healthy pets that are euthanized every year. To help control the overpopulation of stray animals, many animal clinics in the area offer multiple animal discounts, as well as having a certain week of the year set aside for discount spays and

neuters. Parkside Animal Hospital is having their annual Spay and Neuter Week, February 21-25. Call today and schedule your appointment. All of us must assume the responsibility of pet ownership and have your animal spayed or neutered.