

ASK OUR VET, DR. SCHMIDT



Why Should I Spay or Neuter My Dog?

First, what does it mean to spay or neuter a dog? Spay refers to removing the sex organs of the female dog, i.e. an ovario-hysterectomy. Both ovaries and the uterus are surgically removed while the dog is under general anesthesia. Neuter commonly refers to castration of or removal of the testicles of a male dog.

There are many good reasons for having your female dog spayed. Besides the obvious fact that your dog will not be able to get pregnant and add to the pet overpopulation problem, she will also not have vaginal bleeding known as “heat” or estrus cycles twice a year. Spaying early also virtually eliminates the occurrence of breast or mammary tumors in female dogs. In addition, since the uterus is removed, a spayed female cannot develop a serious and possibly fatal infection of the uterus known as pyometra, which literally means pus-filled uterus. Uterine and ovarian cancers, while rare in dogs, are also eliminated by spaying. Rare conditions like uterine or vaginal prolapses are also reduced or eliminated by spaying. Finally, spaying may reduce behavior problems in some females.

Don’t worry, the boys don’t get off easy. They can have health and behavioral issues, too, so neutering a male dog is also beneficial. Neutered males are less likely to roam away from home i.e. less likely to get lost or hit by a car. They are less likely to mark their territories with urine and less likely to fight or exhibit aggressive tendencies if neutered. It should be noted however, that spaying and neutering does not solve every canine behavior problem, particu-

larly if it has been an ongoing or long-standing issue. Neutering a male also reduces the chance of prostatic enlargement and prostate infection, prevents testicular cancer and reduces the incidence of some other types of tumors such as perianal adenomas which grow as a result of large amounts of testosterone. While there are minor risks associated with spay or neuter surgeries in dogs, as you can see the health benefits far outweigh the risks for most pets. Please have your dog spayed or neutered if he or she is not a breeding or show dog. Spaying and neutering prevents unwanted puppies in our already full animal shelters and keeps your dog happy and healthy.



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