



NEUTERING-THE FACTS DISPELLING THE MYTHS

Neutering can have really great benefits – both to your pet and to you! Plus you'll be doing your bit to help the growing crisis of pets being abandoned, dumped or given away because there aren't enough homes to go around.

What is neutering?

Neutering means surgically preventing pets from reproducing. In males, the operation is called castration and in females it's called spaying.

With castration both testicles are removed which takes away the main source of the male hormone testosterone. With spaying, both the ovaries and the uterus are removed which means the female is unable to become pregnant.

Dogs do not know that their owner has made a healthy decision on their part or think about what has happened. They are just as happy after the process as before with the benefit of living longer and minus certain hormonal frustrations.

What's involved in the process?

Both operations are carried out under general anaesthetic. This is why it is a veterinary procedure and you should have an appointment with your vet for a health check and full information about any operation. Your canine will spend a whole day in the surgery and a team of vets, veterinary nurses and animal care assistants will be involved in your pet's care throughout the day. Your pet should be able to go home the same day as happy, well and comfortable as before the surgery. It is usual for two post-operative check-ups and 10 days later to have any sutures removed or dissolvable sutures disappeared.

How much does it cost?

The cost can vary a lot depending on the sex and type of dog you have so it's best to check with your vet. Several charities, including The RSPCA and Dogs Trust can help with the cost of neutering so contact your nearest one to find out more.

When should I get my dog neutered?

Female dogs can be spayed from around six months old and there's no benefit to waiting until they've had their first season. Some of the health benefits of spaying are actually reduced if you wait until your dog has had a season. We prefer not to spay whilst a bitch is nearing or in season. There is no upper age limit.

Male dogs can be neutered from around five to six months old although the exact age varies depending on their breed, so speak to your vet – but don't leave it too late otherwise the benefits associated with neutering start to reduce. There is also no upper age limit.

Why should I get my dog neutered?

There are lots of reasons why neutering is a good idea. Here's a few:

For male dogs:

- Neutered male dogs are less likely to roam, which means they're less likely to go missing, get hit by a car, get in a fight and get hurt.
- Unneutered dogs can become frustrated and may try to escape.
- Castration significantly reduces the chance of them getting prostate disease and reduces the risk of some cancers.
- An unneutered dog is more likely to show aggression to other dogs, whether they're on or off the lead.
- An unneutered dog is more likely to be the target of aggression from another dog.

For female dogs:

- Neutering greatly reduces the risk of them getting mammary cancer, particularly if carried out before the first season, and infection of the womb (called pyometra). Both of these are seen quite often in older, unneutered dogs and they can be fatal.
- Pregnancy and birth can be risky to the mum.
- Many unneutered female dogs have a false pregnancy after a season and, although this is natural, it can cause behavioural and even medical problems.

For you:

- An unneutered dog is much more likely to direct their amorous intentions towards your favourite sofa – or your visiting auntie.
- When a female dog is in season she attracts a stream of hopeful male dogs to the front door. In fact, male dogs have even been known to break down doors and fences trying to reach a potential mate.
- If a female gets pregnant you've got the responsibility of having to care for her during her pregnancy, birth and looking after her litter – and that's before the challenge of trying to find good homes for the puppies. Some breeds of dog can have as many as 12 puppies in just one litter. That's a lot of mouths to feed and the costs will soon add up.
- Female dogs in heat can be messy – they produce a bloody discharge for three weeks or more.

For dog-kind:

- Thousands of unwanted dogs are put to sleep every year because there aren't enough homes for them. You can help by neutering your dog.

What happens after the surgery?

Some people worry that their dog's personality will change. This isn't true but you might see a fall in certain behaviour – roaming, mounting, fighting or spraying urine.

People also worry that their pet will get fat. If their diet is suitable and they are exercised normally there is no reason for a neutered pet to increase in weight. Old wives tales say that it can affect the coat condition. Feeding the correct diet ensures that the coat will not change and with dietary advice may actually improve.

Neutered dogs can be shown according to Kennel Club rules.

If you are interested in having your pet neutered please call The Animal House Ltd on 01926 494923 where we can discuss our non-profit prices and our tried and tested extra safe keyhole techniques which include general pre-operative blood testing and all post operative checks.