

Neutering

Unless you are going to breed or show your puppy or kitten, it is advisable to have it neutered—this applies both to the male and female. There are valid social and health reasons for doing so, and we'll discuss each in turn.



Male Cat

Let's start with the male, or tom cat, since he probably causes the most headaches. Tom cats, in general, are forever fighting. They fight for territory, which translate into sexual supremacy over other toms. They love to fight, and fight to love.

Constant roaming and fighting leads to torn ears, scratches and abscesses. All this is detrimental to his health and usually causes an earlier demise than normal.

Abscesses are also expensive to treat, and some toms can get two or three a year.

An equally annoying problem with the tom cat is his habit of urine spraying. As far as your cat is concerned, this spraying is perfectly normal behaviour and serves a dual purpose. It attracts females in heat to his lair, and it warns all other males to keep away – or else!

Female Cat

Female cats can come in heat as early as five months and are very fertile. An encounter means certain pregnancy. Cats can get quite nasty during heat periods and become aggressive even with their owners. The female, if kept indoors, will attract all the local toms to call and fight outside her door. These visitors will also spray all over your property – not a delightful experience!

Female Dog

The bitch's heat periods can be quite messy since they bleed a lot at this time. The bitch is also very fertile, and a litter is almost a certainty if she is mated. A bitch in heat also means constant visits from the local pack of loose dogs, with all that entails – messing on your property, howling, fighting and the like. There has even been a case of a male dog diving in through a plate glass window to reach a bitch in heat!

Male Dog

These guys tend to cause the least problems (except for the above-mentioned plate glass window), and this is one reason why many are not neutered. But, as we'll see, there are very sound reasons to neuter a male dog. Unneutered males do tend to become more aggressive and they also tend to wander off more when "the scent" is in the wind. This brings with it a much greater chance of fighting and road accidents.

Surgical Neutering

Neutering is performed under general anesthesia and is painless to your pet. There is obviously some discomfort afterwards, but this is all part of any normal healing process.

For males, neutering involves removal of the testes, called castration. For females, the uterus and ovaries are removed. This is known as spaying, or more correctly as an ovariohysterectomy.

Most pets are neutered between four-and-a-half and six months of age. There is no age limit after that.

Benefits of Neutering

- Obviously, the pet cannot become pregnant and you are not contributing to the over-population problem.
- There are no more heat periods and the tom's spraying is prevented; no more male dogs hanging around your house.
- Cancer of the mammary glands, which is very common in unspayed females, is almost unheard of if they are spayed young. Obviously, the dangers of ovarian and uterine cancers are eliminated.
- The danger of pyometra, an often fatale uterine infection, is eliminated.
- Prostate tumours and enlargements are a rarity in neutered male dogs.
- Aggressiveness with other dogs is reduced after neutering.
- By neutering your male dog or cat, you are doing your bit to control pet population. Remember, one intact male can literally sire thousands of offspring, so be a responsible pet owner.