



## SPAY AND NEUTER YOUR PET

We know that your pet is companion, a friend, and in a real sense a member of your family. In order to reduce the number of animals ending up in shelters or being euthanized, we recommend all cats and dogs be spayed or neutered.

### **FEMALE DOGS AND CATS ARE MATURE ENOUGH TO REPRODUCE STARTING AT THE AGE OF SIX TO NINE MONTHS**

#### **DOGS**

- Go through an estrus (heat cycle) every six months
- This is accompanied by a bleeding cycle (proestrus) prior to the true heat cycle in which she is very receptive to the advances of males
- This heat cycle may last from several days to four weeks
- Often female dogs will experience some personality changes during heat cycles
- Short-tempered
- Anxious

#### **CATS**

- Go through heat every three to four weeks during certain times of the year
- Many female cats will become nervous during these heat cycles and exhibit unusual behaviors such as rolling on the floor, furtively hiding, or wanting constant attention.
- Female cats often become quite vocal, too, meowing plaintively throughout their cycle.

Surgical neutering (spay or ovariectomy) of female dogs and cats, completely eliminates all heat cycles and the accompanying unwanted bleeding cycle, nervousness, and desire to mate. Neutering your female dog or cat will also protect your pet from uterine infections and other diseases as well as difficult or dangerous pregnancies. Studies show that by neutering your female dog before her first heat cycle, you can greatly reduce her chances of developing mammary cancer later in life. The surgery involves the removal of the ovaries and uterus.

Most male dogs and cats are ready and willing to reproduce by the time they are six to 12 months of age. They are able to breed consistently throughout the year. Both male dogs and cats are prone to wander in search of romance and find themselves exposed to dog/cat fights. In addition, male cats are well-known to mark their territories by spraying odorous urine on furniture, walls, shrubs, etc. Male dogs are sometimes equally anxious to mark their territories.

Surgical neutering (castration or orchiectomy) of male dogs and cats, eliminates any reproductive behavior and reduces urine odor and the desire to spray. Your male dog or cat will continue to have his own unique personality. He will be less likely to roam and enjoy staying at home more. The surgery removes the testicles.

Deciding when the best time to neuter your pet is a decision you should discuss with your veterinarian. We typically recommend neutering between 4 and 6 months of age or about 2 weeks after the last of the puppy vaccinations.

Both male and female dogs and cats are mature enough to reproduce starting at the age of six to nine months. Therefore, we recommend neutering between 4 and 6 months of age.