



Neutering your Pet



Neutering your pet

Too many animals competing for too few homes has resulted in thousands of stray dogs and cats worldwide and an overpopulation crisis. Many struggle for survival on a daily basis and are often the victims of cruelty and neglect, forcing them to lead short and difficult lives.

If we look at current population statistics for un-neutered cats; a male and female and all offspring born as a result of their first and subsequent litters, can contribute to over 20,000 cats in a 4 year period. These numbers serve as an indication of how quickly population figures can spiral out of control.

This is the reality for most stray animals and unless a humane solution is implemented to remedy the problem, thousands more will be born into a miserable existence. We believe that neutering animals is crucial to this solution to enable us to move towards a world where the number of animals born meets the number of homes available and we no longer see dogs and cats suffering on the streets.

Many of you will have welcomed a pet into your family and will be committed to ensuring that they lead a happy, healthy life, far removed from the situation many stray animals find themselves in. Part of this responsibility involves deciding whether or not to neuter your pet and we hope that this fact sheet will provide you with the information you need to support your decision.

What is neutering?

Neutering is a routine operation carried out under a general anaesthetic that will prevent your dog or cat from reproducing. In males, this process is called 'castration' and in females it is called 'spaying'. It is the humane way to prevent unwanted puppies and kittens from being born.



What are the benefits of getting my pet neutered?

In addition to your pet being likely to live a longer, healthier life, there are many other benefits to consider:

- Early neutering can reduce the risk of some cancers, diseases and potentially fatal infections of the womb, developing in later life.
- Your pet may become calmer with more predictable behaviour.
- Neutering reduces problems associated with territorial and sexual aggression, inappropriate urination, and other undesirable male behaviours.
- It decreases the urge to roam to look for a mate which in turn reduces the risk of your pet being involved in a road traffic accident or a fight, sustaining terrible injuries. For male cats this could also reduce their chance of catching Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV), which is an incurable viral disease spread by saliva and most frequently picked up from bite wounds while fighting.
- There will be no bleeding in between the female's cycles or exposure to the risks associated with pregnancy and giving birth. Many bitches will also have a false pregnancy following their season and while this is natural, it can lead to behavioural problems and in some cases, medical ones.
- It prevents the unnecessary cost of unplanned pregnancies and any veterinary bills associated with accidents/fights caused whilst roaming.

Is it cruel to neuter my pet?

Some owners are concerned that neutering may make their dog or cat mourn the loss of their reproductive capability. This is not the case. Dogs and cats reproduce solely to ensure the survival of their species and as we currently have an overpopulation crisis in many countries worldwide we need to actively reduce the number of puppies and kittens being born. Unlike humans, they don't raise their young for eighteen years or hope to have grandchildren in their old age. Female dogs, for example, nurse for a few weeks, teach the puppies the life skills they will need and then send them off to join the pack.



When should I get my pet neutered?

Although your pet can be neutered at any time during its life, it is greatly beneficial if it's done at an early age. Most veterinarians will neuter dogs of either sex from the age of about 4 months and for cats this is routinely performed at 5-6 months since after this age they will become sexually mature and capable of reproducing. We would advise that you consult with your local veterinarian about the most appropriate time to neuter your pet.

Contrary to popular belief, you do not need to wait until your female dog or cat has gone through its first heat cycle before being spayed.

Will my pet put on weight if they are neutered?

As long as your pet continues to receive a healthy, balanced diet and has access to plenty of exercise, they should not put on weight.

Will their personality change?

No, but unwanted behaviours may be reduced, such as roaming, mounting, fighting or urine spraying.

How much will neutering cost?

This varies depending on a number of factors such as the breed/size of your pet, whether they are a male or a female and how much your local veterinary surgery charges to perform this procedure.

The price for a female to be spayed is usually more expensive than a castration due to the nature of the operation. However, for both sexes, this will be a relatively small fee compared to the cost you could incur if your pet remains unneutered.

For detailed pricing, contact your local veterinary surgeon who will be able to advise you on this and provide you with more information about the procedure, what you need to do the day before the operation and what care your pet will need afterwards.

If you have any questions about neutering or a query about any aspect of this fact sheet, please email us at enquiries@iapwa.org and our Veterinary Panel will be happy to advise you.