Top 10 Reasons to Spay or Neuter Your Pet

ASPCA

Whether you've recently adopted a **pet** or you're considering it, one of the most important health decisions you'll make is to spay or neuter your **cat** or **dog**. Spaying-removing the ovaries and uterus of a female **pet**-is a veterinary procedure that requires minimal hospitalization and offers lifelong health benefits. Neutering-removing the testicles of your male dog or **cat**-will vastly improve your pet's behavior and keep him close to home.

Many states and counties have established low-cost spay/neuter programs that make surgery easily affordable and accessible. To find a low-cost program near you, search our Low-Cost Spay/Neuter Provider Database. If you're in New York City or South Los Angeles, the ASPCA offers free or low-cost spay/neuter surgery for financially challenged dog and **cat** owners with proof of public assistance. Please contact our hotline at (877) SPAY-NYC for a listing of dates and locations.

Not convinced yet? Check out our handy-and persuasive-list of the top 10 reasons to spay or neuter your pet!

1. **Your female pet will live a longer, healthier life.**
   Spaying helps prevent uterine infections and breast cancer, which is fatal in about 50 percent of dogs and 90 percent of cats. Spaying your pet before her first heat offers the best protection from these diseases.
2. **Neutering provides major health benefits for your male.**
   Besides preventing unwanted litters, neutering your male companion prevents testicular cancer.
3. **Your spayed female won't go into heat.**
   While cycles can vary, female felines usually go into heat four to five days every three weeks during breeding season. In an effort to advertise for mates, they'll yowl and urinate more frequently-sometimes all over the house!
4. **Your male dog won't want to roam away from home.**
   An intact male will do just about anything to find a mate! That includes digging his way under the fence and making like Houdini to escape from the house. And once he's free to roam, he risks injury in traffic and fights with other males.
5. **Your neutered male will be much better behaved.**
   Neutered cats and dogs focus their attention on their human families. On the other hand, unneutered dogs and cats may mark their territory by spraying strong-smelling urine all over the house. Many aggression problems can be avoided by early neutering.
6. **Spaying or neutering will NOT make your pet fat.**
   Don't use that old excuse! Lack of exercise and overfeeding will cause your pet to pack on the extra pounds-not neutering. Your pet will remain fit and trim as long as you continue to provide exercise and monitor food intake.
7. **It is highly cost-effective.**
   The cost of your pet's spay/neuter surgery is a lot less than the cost of having and caring for a litter. It also beats the cost of treatment when your unneutered tom escapes and gets into fights with the neighborhood stray!

8. **Spaying and neutering your pet is good for the community.**
   Stray animals pose a real problem in many parts of the country. They can prey on wildlife, cause car accidents, damage the local fauna and frighten children. Spaying and neutering packs a powerful punch in reducing the number of animals on the streets.

9. **Your pet doesn't need to have a litter for your children to learn about the miracle of birth.**
   Letting your pet produce offspring you have no intention of keeping is not a good lesson for your children-especially when so many unwanted animals end up in shelters. There are tons of books and videos available to teach your children about birth in a more responsible way.

10. **Spaying and neutering helps fight pet overpopulation.**
    Every year, millions of cats and dogs of all ages and breeds are euthanized or suffer as strays. These high numbers are the result of unplanned litters that could have been prevented by spaying or neutering.

TOP PICKS

- **How to Keep Your Dog Healthy**
- **Outdoor Cats: How to Keep Them Safe**
- **Risky Mistakes Pet Owners Make**
- **First Aid for Pets**

FURTHER READING

- **Slideshow: Risky Mistakes Pet Owners Make**
- **Slideshow: Kitten Care -- From Adoption to Kitty-Proofing Your Home**
- **<u>Spaying or Neutering Your Cat FAQ</u>**
- **Spaying or Neutering Your Dog FAQ**