

SPAYING or NEUTERING *your dog*

Part of being conscientious dog owner is considering the importance of spaying or neutering your pup. Read on for more info on this surgery and the truth behind some common myths.



Spaying and neutering your dog

If you've ever visited an animal shelter, you've seen some of the thousands of pets each year who are homeless. And many of those pets run out of time for adoption and are euthanized. You can't save them all, but you can help prevent pet overpopulation by spaying or neutering your dog.

Need more reasons to "fix" your pet? Besides preventing unwanted litters, spaying or neutering helps prevent many life-threatening diseases and can head off some irritating behaviors.

Spaying

Although it's commonly referred to as a spay, this surgery is actually a complete ovariectomy, or the removal of both ovaries and the uterus. Spayed dogs are at much lower risk for ovarian cancers and cysts, mammary gland tumors, and uterine infections.

Neutering

Neutering is the removal of both testicles. It sounds worse than it is—and no, he won't miss them! Neu-

tered males are less susceptible to prostate disease and testicular cancer. They're also less likely to act aggressive or to wander away from home, so neuter your pet before his heart leads him into the path of an oncoming car.

Common myths

Often people worry that their spayed or neutered pet will get fat. However, the aging process probably affects weight gain more than anything—as many of us are painfully aware from our human experience. It's true that lowered hormone levels may decrease your pet's activity. The key to this problem is simple—give your pet less food and more exercise.

It's also a myth that females need to complete a heat cycle before being spayed. There is no medical reason for this old wives' tale. In fact, the fewer heat cycles your pet goes through before getting spayed, the better her protection against mammary cancer.

Worried that your male dog may lose his personality or "spunk" after being neutered? Don't! If he loses anything, it'll be the potential for bad behavior.