



A BEST FRIENDS® INITIATIVE

SPAYING AND NEUTERING FAQS

WHAT IS SPAYING AND NEUTERING?

Spaying and neutering are surgical procedures that prevent dogs and cats from reproducing. These are simple, routine surgeries performed at a veterinarian's office.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF SPAY/NEUTER?

When you spay or neuter your pet, you're preventing unwanted litters of puppies or kittens (that you would have to find homes for), but you're also doing more than that.

Spayed or neutered pets have better lives. People who spay or neuter their pets often find that their furry friends become calmer and more content. Without those raging reproductive hormones that make animals long to roam and mate — regularly — your pet is going to be more comfortable being a pet. Also, spayed or neutered pets are much less likely to get certain kinds of cancer. Spaying and neutering may help prevent "marking" (peeing) inside your house. It makes cats yowl less and makes pets less likely to run away. You'll no longer have to clean up after a female in heat. And neutered males are less likely to bite people than unneutered ones. Plus, there are hundreds of thousands shelter dogs and cats looking for homes. If your cat or dog escapes and creates a litter (one you may not even know about), those puppies or kittens will likely wind up in an already crowded shelter system where, sadly, many animals will not find homes and will be euthanized. Every stray litter makes that problem a little worse, while every spay or neuter helps save the lives of shelter pets.

IS SPAY/NEUTER EXPENSIVE?

Not compared to the cost of caring for a litter of little ones! To find out if you qualify for low-cost or free spay/neuter services for your pet, please visit the [spay/neuter resource page](#).

IS IT A DIFFICULT PROCEDURE?

Spay and neuter are routine procedures, and complications are rare. Your pet will be under full anesthesia and won't feel any pain. He or she will probably be ready to come home within a few hours; some pets, depending on age or health status, may have to stay overnight. Your veterinarian will tell you what to expect.

AT WHAT AGE CAN MY PET BE SPAYED OR NEUTERED?

As early as eight weeks old, in many cases.

WILL MY PET'S PERSONALITY CHANGE?

Your pet will still be your pet. The only subtle difference may be that he or she is more comfortable. Without those raging hormones, your best friend's life will become a lot more relaxed. Otherwise, he or she will still be the same dog or cat. Your pet's playfulness, desire to protect your family from burglars, and the personality you've come to know and love will all remain unchanged.

WHAT IF I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE PUPPIES OR KITTENS?

There are adorable puppies and kittens available for adoption at animal shelters and rescue groups nationwide. And they come in every color, breed and variety. Adopting a puppy or kitten is much better than allowing your pet to have a litter. When you adopt a homeless puppy or kitten, you're saving a life. But when you create new puppies and kittens instead, you're not only missing out on that opportunity, but the homes you find for the litter will no longer be available as homes for shelter pets. Plus, having litters can be expensive. Many pets wind up needing C-sections, which can cost a great deal of money. If you really want the experience of looking after a whole litter at once, you can sign up to be a foster parent for new litters of puppies or kittens at your local shelter or rescue group.