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Spaying and Castrating

Spaying or castrating a pet is the single most important elective surgery that you can have performed for your canine or feline friend. Complications from the surgery are rare and the greatest risk involved is usually the anesthesia. With the advent of safe gas anesthesia this risk is also increasingly minimal.

Spaying involves the surgical removal of the ovaries and uterus. The ONLY reason for a female cat or dog to remain intact is if the animal is of the highest purebred standards and there is reason to believe that the genetic line can be further improved by breeding. ALL mixed breed animals should be spayed at the appropriate age. The benefits of spaying are numerous. Female canines spayed before they have their first heat cycle have a greatly reduced chance - less than 1% - of developing mammary cancer later in life. Mammary cancer is a leading cancer in older non-spayed females. Spaying also eliminates the possibility of developing ovarian and uterine cancers and eliminates the possibility of uterine infections.

In addition, spaying also eliminates the possibility of unwanted pregnancy. This aids in reducing the already staggering number of unwanted and stray pets.

Castrating a male dog or cat involves complete removal of the testicles. There are many benefits to this surgery. The influence of testosterone can play a major role in aggressive behavior. Removal of the testicles reduces the hormonal influence on aggressive behavior. Castration also eliminates the chances of testicular cancer as well as greatly reducing the chances of a male dog developing tumors called perianal adenomas which are unsightly and can become ulcerated, infected, or cancerous. Castration also reduces the incidence of prostate problems later in life.

Contrary to popular belief, neutering a pet does NOT drastically change their personality. An aggressive animal may become less aggressive or a hyperactive animal less hyperactive. The surgery also does NOT automatically lead to obesity. The surgery does however change metabolism and it is recommended that the pet's food intake be reduced slightly following surgery.

Spaying or castrating is an important and responsible decision. It is recommended that dogs and cats be neutered at approximately 6 months of age.