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## BC SPCA - A Problem You Can Fix

### *Have your pet spayed or neutered*

#### The Problem

#### Too many cats and dogs and not enough homes!

In just 7 years, one unsplayed cat and her offspring can produce over 450,000 cats! (average litter of 3, twice a year)



In 7 years, one dog and her offspring can produce over 4,000 dogs! (average litter of 4, once a year)

#### The Solution?

- Have your own pet spayed or neutered.
- Encourage friends, family and neighbours to have their animals spayed and neutered.
- Sponsor the spaying and neutering of a shelter animal.
- Volunteer to do adoption follow-up at your [BC SPCA shelter](#) to ensure people who have adopted animals have complied with the spay/neuter requirement in their adoption agreement.

#### What Is Being Done in British Columbia to Deal With This Problem?

The official goal of the British Columbia SPCA is to reach zero euthanasia of adoptable animals - and we are making real progress. Through the mandatory spaying and neutering of animals adopted from our shelters, [maximum adoption initiatives](#), subsidized spaying and neutering for people experiencing financial hardship, and through school programs and public education such as the 1+1=6 campaign, we are beginning to make a difference.

#### What Do the Terms “Spaying” and “Neutering” Mean?

“Spaying” and “neutering” are surgical procedures used to prevent pets from reproducing. In a female animal, “spaying” consists of removing the uterus and ovaries. The technical term is ovario-hysterectomy. For a male animal, “neutering” involves the removal of the testicles, and this is known as castration.

#### Does It Hurt?

As the surgery is done under a general anaesthetic it is painless. The operation for both males and for females is straightforward and low risk. Recovery is usually uneventful. The worst your pet might experience is some discomfort for a short time after the operation.

#### When Should It Be Done?

The usual recommendation is at 6 to 7 months for both cats and dogs. Your veterinarian should be consulted to determine the best time for your pet.

**The BC SPCA supports, in principle, early age spay/neuter procedures** for dogs and cats as a goal towards further addressing the overpopulation problem in these species, to combat excessive euthanasia of unwanted animals by preventing excess litters through pre-pubertal surgery and by enhancing the desirable policy of neuter before adoption. The Society will continue to promote other methods of combating pet overpopulation including education and public awareness campaigns, non-surgical methods of sterilization, traditional spay/neuter initiatives and behaviour training.

The BC SPCA believes pediatric neutering to be appropriate with the following qualifications:

- The procedure takes place between 8 and 16 weeks of age.
- The animal is judged to be clinically normal and healthy prior to surgery.
- Proper surgical protocols peculiar to these young animals are employed.
- Post-neuter complications receive special attention.
- Close monitoring of possible long term effects and difficulties continues indefinitely.

### **Shouldn't A Female Pet Have One Litter First?**

Allowing a female dog or cat to produce a litter does not have any benefits. There are health risks to the mother during the pregnancy and when giving birth.

### **Will My Pet Become Fat and Lazy Once He or She is Sterilized?**

*No.* Your pet will actually benefit from spaying or neutering, because he or she will lead a healthier and longer life. Pets become fat and lazy as a result of overeating and a lack of exercise, not from spaying or neutering. Furthermore, spaying a female eliminates the possibility of her developing uterine and/or ovarian cancer and greatly reduces the chance of breast cancer. Neutering a male reduces the incidence of prostate enlargement and prostate cancer.

### **Will It Change My Pet's Personality?**

Generally not. For a female there is virtually no change at all. For males it usually results in a diminishing of some aggressive behaviours. Spayed/neutered pets are free from sexual anxiety and are, therefore, calmer and more content to stay at home. Also, if you have more than one pet, you will find they get along much better if they are all spayed or neutered.

### **What is It Going To Cost To Spay/Neuter My Pet?**

The cost of spaying or neutering your pet depends on many factors. For example, a large dog will cost more than a small dog; if your pet is overweight or in season this can also add to the cost. Contact your veterinarian to get a more accurate idea of the costs involved for your pet.

The cost of spaying/neutering is really quite small when compared, for example, to what you will spend on food for your pet over its lifetime. Also consider the possible costs if you do not spay and neuter. If your pet should wander off in search of a mate, you may be faced with paying fines and impoundment costs. You may also be faced with the additional costs of maintaining puppies or kittens for whom finding homes may be difficult. Worse yet, think of the costs should your pet be injured while roaming for a mate.

### **Does Having My Pet Spayed/Neutered Make Me A Responsible Pet Guardian?**

Having your pet spayed or neutered is one important part of being a responsible pet guardian. Being responsible also means providing your pet with a warm, safe and loving environment, food and water, exercise, and proper veterinary care. You should also obey the leash, "poop and scoop", and licensing laws in your community.

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<http://www.sPCA.bc.ca/AnimalIssues/spayneuter.asp>