

Spaying and Neutering

Spaying or neutering your new puppy is the right thing to do if you're not planning on breeding. For most pet owners, the expense, time and expertise involved in breeding dogs responsibly is beyond their reach. Here are some advantages to having your puppy spayed or neutered:

- For females, there is no mess to deal with (drips and puddles of blood) during their 21-day heat cycles, which occur every six months—the heat cycle begins in females sometime after six months of age.
- Spaying a female before her first heat cycle will reduce the chance of mammary tumors or uterine diseases.
- Neutered males tend to be less aggressive than unneutered males.
- With a neutered male, the urge to mark territory may lessen.
- A neutered male is less likely to want to roam in search of potential mates.
- Spayed and neutered dogs don't have unwanted puppies.

When to spay or neuter

Males should be neutered by the time they are four to five months old, before they ever have the inclination to mark their territory. Females should be spayed by 6 to 7 months of age, before they have their first season. Both operations are performed under anesthesia and may require an overnight stay at the veterinarian's office. Recovery time is quick, with most dogs resuming normal activity in a few days. Spaying (for females) consists of an ovario-hysterectomy. Neutering involves the removal of the testicles.

When you bring your puppy to the veterinarian's office for his first thorough examination, have the doctor explain the operation in detail and schedule a time to have the procedure done.