
Why Spay and Neuter?

THOSE OF US WHO LOVE OUR PETS DON'T LIKE TO IMAGINE WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE TO SEE HEALTHY ANIMALS LIKE OUR OWN PUT TO SLEEP.

Have you ever wondered what would have become of your dog or cat had you not given it a home? How sad it is to think that a dog or cat just as handsome, just as loving, and just as worthwhile as your own might live a wanted life as a stray and be euthanized-unwanted, thrown away like useless refuse.

The love of animals can take many forms-not all kinds of love have the interest of animals at heart. We think of our pets as special and unique-the human desire to see the valuable qualities of our animals reproduced may lead us to a course of action that hurts animals. We hesitate to neuter and spay; we look away from the ugliness of euthanasia and our part in it. Yet the fact is, for every wonderful, loving pet we have in our homes, there is another animal, just as wonderful and loving waiting in the Santa Clara animal shelter for a chance at a happy life-and never getting one. Tens of thousands of unwanted puppies and kittens are euthanized every year in San Jose because pet owners did not neuter and spay-here are a few of their reasons why:

"My animal has such great looks and temperament, we want more just like him/her"-there already are more just like him/her. Before your pet became yours, he was just another animal. Your love is what makes your dog or cat different from any of the more than 37,000 animals that went through the Santa Clara shelter in 1988. Were none of the 27,000 that were euthanized special?

"Our friends/relatives want pups or kittens"-the Humane Society and rescue groups have more puts and kittens than they can find homes for-many of them are purebred some even show quality. Why create more animals to take up homes that are so desperately needed?

"We want another pet, but don't want to pay for one"-the Humane Society and many rescue groups charge only basic veterinary costs for pets, costs that are inevitable if proper care is to be taken of the animal. Adoption fees for these groups amount to less than what you will spend on start-up vet



expenses. If you take decent care of it, a pet is never "free", no matter where it comes from.

"We always find good homes for the pups/kittens"-every good home found, takes a home away from a puppy or kitten that is waiting to be adopted at the Humane Society or from a rescue group. The animals from your pet's litter can only escape euthanasia at the expense of other animals. Whether it's your puppies or kittens who must be put down or someone else's, you are causing animals to be euthanized, no matter how good your intentions were when you started.

"These guys will be worth a lot of money because they are AKC purebred"-only 1 in 10 of the offspring of any AKC champion is valuable as a show dog, the rest are pet quality and are not of particular value to knowledgeable buyers. If you are not educated in canine genetics, you stand very little chance of producing truly valuable dogs.

"Our dog comes from Champion lines", "We are going to show our dog someday"-under the guidelines set forth by the America Kennel Club, "The Right to Breed", only those dogs which have been campaigned in the show ring and judged to be of extraordinary value to the breeding pool, should be considered for breeding. Dogs who do not attain AKC championship status are not rightful candidates for breeding stock. A great many breeds have been ruined by inexperienced "back yard" breeders. If you love the breed you own, protect it-by leaving the future of the breed to professionals.

"We invested a lot of money in this dog and we want to get some back"-if you provide proper veterinary care for the pups, you are likely to lose money because of the enormous expense of puppy vet care, stud fees, pre- and post-natal care of the female. If you breed without a knowledge of canine genetics, your odds of creating pups with long-term medical problems and disorders are greatly increased. Costs are high even when everything goes well. If anything goes wrong, if even one puppy is ill, you will almost certainly take a financial

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bath, and will be fortunate if you escape without having to make some of the unpleasant decisions about euthanasia that professional breeders deal with on a routine basis. To make a profit, some breeders euthanize all but show quality pups.

"We think our black lab, crossed with a Golden Retriever would be a neat combination"-its been done. Over 14,000 mixed breed dogs of every conceivable combination were turned into the Santa Clara Humane Society in 1988 alone. More than 7,000 of these were euthanized, because no one wanted them.

"Spaying/neutering is unnatural"-so is eating food from a can, and living with a human family. Dogs and cats have been "unnatural" since their domestication tens of thousands of years ago. To make an animal a "pet" is to denaturalize it.

"My female dog will make a better pet if she has one litter"- this is an old wives' tale. There is no evidence from any behavioral study that supports this. In fact, the physical and emotional stress of having pups often gives rise to aggression in the female as she tries to protect her pups from you and your family.

"We keep our pets indoors, and would never let an accident happen" - there is a reason why "accidents" are called "accidents". It is nearly impossible to stop your unneutered male from trying to get to a female, and to keep determined males away from your unsplayed female. Females have a 92% reduced risk of mammary cancer (one of the most common types of fatal cancer) if spayed before the first heat. Risk increases 7% per heat. The death rate for unneutered males is many times higher than that of neutered males, due to the increased risk of escape. If your intention is not to breed your pet, why leave your male with the desire to get out of the house or yard by not neutering, and your female open to increased risk of cancer by not saying?

"We think pet over-population problems are exaggerated" - In 1988, in Santa Clara County alone, nearly 38,000 animals were turned into the Humane Society. 27,327 of these were euthanized because no homes could be found for them. With actual figures like these, there is no need to exaggerate.

"We don't have the money to spay or neuter" - there are several low cost spay and neuter clinics, and even a few financial-assistance programs for truly needy families who want to be responsible owners.

"We don't want our male dog to be a sissy" - the training and handling of a dog dictates how competently he deals with intruders. Males remain territorial if they are encouraged to do so, regardless of their sexual experience. Generally, sexually motivated behavior interferes with a dog's performance and level of obedience - it does not enhance it.

"We don't want to interfere with our pet's sex life" - pets can be so much like people, that it's natural to sometimes forget they are animals. Cats and dogs have sex for one purpose only: to make puppies and kittens. They do not think about

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sex, wish for sex, or have sex for enjoyment. They simply respond to biological drives that are designed to perpetuate their species. It can be a great relief to an animal to escape the constant stress of biological forces. Since sex almost always results in pregnancy, to allow the animal to follow its reproductive instincts is to be directly responsible for the creation of unwanted puppies and kittens.

"We want the children to experience the miracle of birth" - because there is a direct relationship between allowing your dog or cat to have a litter, and the euthanasia totals at the animal shelter, you may be teaching your children a lesson quite different from "the miracle of birth". Instead of teaching them respect for life, you could be teaching them that animals are disposable items, whose welfare is of little consequence. Teach them instead what it means to truly value animal life, by explaining to them why your pet will not be having puppies or kittens - because it wouldn't be fair to the puppies and kittens waiting for homes at the animal shelter, and that this is something that matters to you. Teach them that human beings must sometimes make a sacrifice in order to respect the lives of other creatures - it is a lesson that will serve them well as they face the struggles of their generation to preserve the environment of this planet. If you'd like your children to witness birth, there are many professional breeders in the area that will allow your family to participate in the experience. In watching puppies or kittens that are truly planned and wanted, your children will come to know birth as a joyous event, and not as a prelude to inevitable unhappiness and death.

"We don't care"-----?

Please, if your dog or cat is not a show ring champion, show your love for animals by neutering or spaying your pet.

Enough is enough. Don't be a part of the euthanasia problem, become part of the solution -- neuter and spay saves lives.

Presented for your consideration by the Nike Animal Rescue Foundation