

Spay and Neuter Facts

Learn the answers to common questions about spay and neuter surgery procedures.

Q: When should I spay or neuter my pet? As early as possible! Although cats traditionally are altered at six months, many veterinarians now practice early-age spay/neuter surgery, which can be performed on cats as young as six to eight weeks. Doctors practicing this technique report that the surgery is significantly easier and quicker to perform; owners who have had early-age spay/neuter performed on their pets report fewer medical problems than those who have older pets altered; and spaying or neutering homeless pets before adopting them out is the best way to prevent unwanted births.

Q: Is spaying and neutering expensive? Although to some pet owners the cost of surgery may seem high initially, it's a bargain when compared with the cost of raising a litter of kittens. Spaying and neutering also saves taxpayer dollars. A recent survey of 186 shelters revealed an average cost of \$176 to handle each homeless animal* a cost that ultimately comes out of taxpayer dollars.

While prices for spay/neuter surgery vary considerably, many humane societies, welfare organizations and municipal animal care and control departments will spay/neuter animals at a reduced fee for people who truly need them those struggling to make ends meet on a low income, animal rescue workers such as those who trap and neuter feral cats and Good Samaritans who are paying for someone else's animal(s).

Spaying or neutering is as vital to your pet's health and happiness as routine physical examinations, good nutrition, grooming, playtime and love. * Wenstrup, John, and Alexis Dowidchuk, "Pet Overpopulation: Data and Measurement Issues in Shelters," *Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science*, 2(4), 1999, 303-319.