

SPAYING AND NEUTERING

Q. Won't spaying or neutering make my pet get fat and lazy?

A. Not necessarily. Animals get fat and lazy from lack of exercise or being over fed. The hormone level in the dog's body might change after surgery so you will need to adjust the amount of food you are giving accordingly. Usually you will now feed less. The key also is to use a quality dog food that is with the right amount of protein and fat for the type of dog you have. (I prefer 24-26 % protein for retrievers). Lower amounts of protein will have higher amounts of carbohydrates and this usually adds weight also.

Q. Since I find good homes for all of the litter, shouldn't I let my pet quality dog give birth before fixing them?

A. There is rarely a guarantee that the puppy you give/sell to your friends will also not be allowed to breed, adding to the number of pets that will be put to death each year or become strays. A "pet quality" animal is one that was chosen and sold to you not for breeding purposes. Only the best of each litter should be considered for reproduction to promote the breed standard. Others should not be bred.

Q. Isn't the surgery painful and dangerous?

A. It is certainly less painful and dangerous than mating and giving birth. Surgery is performed under anesthesia and is painless. Precautions are always taken by the vet. There is discomfort for a few days after just like surgery in people.

Q. What is the age to spay or neuter a dog?

A. Times have changed and now the thinking is to leave the hormones in the body longer to help growth and these hormones can affect diseases. (See *the long but excellent article listed additionally*). One thing to keep in mind for male dogs is that you need to neuter the male before he develops any signs of male aggression with other male dogs. Usually these signs start about 1 year of age. This is important when the male is for a family companion, to be around children and other males that aren't neutered. In some breeds, the males are more aggressive than others. This is the case with the Chesapeake Bay Retriever although I have been around some Lab and Golden males that are also aggressive.

Q. Isn't the surgery costly?

A. The surgery is only performed once in your pet's lifetime so look at it that way. Prices do vary quite a bit between different Vet offices as well. There are now many spay and neuter clinics that are very inexpensive, average \$90 - \$150. And many animal shelters are inexpensive so check these sources for the surgery.

Q. Shouldn't they have a litter before they are spayed?

A. No... There are no medical advantages in permitting your pet to have a litter once before spaying. Spaying a female reduces the chances of mammary tumors, depending on the age it is done. (See this in the attached article). A dog that experiences motherhood doesn't automatically develop a better temperament. Often, just the opposite occurs. All dogs the same as all people are not necessarily good candidates for having offspring!

Neutered males are also better behaved. (This does not mean that you can forget obedience training them! We are only talking about their male tendencies) The males are less likely to run away from home, and less likely to urinate in the house. Most intact males (in the case of Chesapeakes) are very dominant and can get into a fight with another male, whether hunting or on a family outing at the lake. This could be very dangerous for the dog as well as the children and adults that are present.

Q. Shouldn't my children be able to witness the miracle of the birth of a litter?

A. NO! It is not important that pet ownership teach about reproduction. This can be learned from books and parents. It is important that pet ownership teach children about responsibility, including the responsibility not to increase the overpopulation of "pets" and pet-quality dogs. Animal shelters have to destroy many dogs because the public has failed to control the pet population.

Let the breeding up to the knowledgeable breeder. They have the background for picking the best puppies in each litter who should be reproduced and those who should not. Breeding is done to promote and save the best that there is, eliminating undesirable traits with each generation and keeping the positive ones. Breeding pet quality animals reinforces that the dogs in the next generation are worse than what we have now and that's not what it is all about.

Redlion Chesapeake Bay Retrievers and Labradors - Jane Pappler

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