

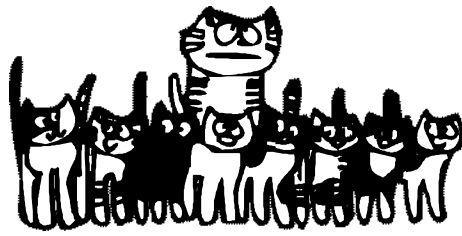


MYTH: I'm concerned that spaying or neutering my pet too young is dangerous and may cause long-term health problems.

### FACTS:

Sterilization of puppies and kittens can be done safely as early as eight weeks of age with no ill effects later on. Many animal shelters have these surgeries performed on their puppies and kittens before they are adopted to ensure that there will be no "accidents" when they mature, adding to the overpopulation problem.

Although some veterinarians are not yet experienced with early-age surgeries, the American Veterinary Medical Association has endorsed spaying and neutering puppies and kittens between 8 - 16 weeks of age as a positive step towards reducing pet overpopulation.



MYTH: Shouldn't she have a litter before she's spayed?

### FACTS:

The more heat cycles a pet has gone through, the more susceptible she is to serious diseases. There are *no* medical advantages in permitting your pet to have a litter.

One of the advantages of neutering a female is that it eliminates the possibility that she will ever have the dangerous disease of the uterus called *pyometra*. When neutering your pet, the veterinarian removes the uterus as well as the ovaries.

Another medical advantage: Neutering a female reduces the chances of mammary tumors. Unneutered females are about 7 times more likely than neutered females to develop such tumors.

Moreover, a cat or dog that experiences motherhood does not automatically develop a better temperament. Often, just the opposite occurs!

Neutering males also reduces cancers, prostate disease, and a serious type of hernia.

Neutered males are also better behaved. They are less likely to run away from home and are less likely to urinate in the house.



MYTH: The surgery costs too much!

### FACTS:

The surgery is only performed once. Divided over the pet's lifetime, the cost is extremely small.

Compare the cost of the surgery with things that cost about the same, but don't last a lifetime:

- One automobile tire
- Auto tune-up
- Dinner and theater for two

The surgery can be considered an investment in the life of your cat or dog, since it prevents unwanted heat cycles, litters, and serious diseases.

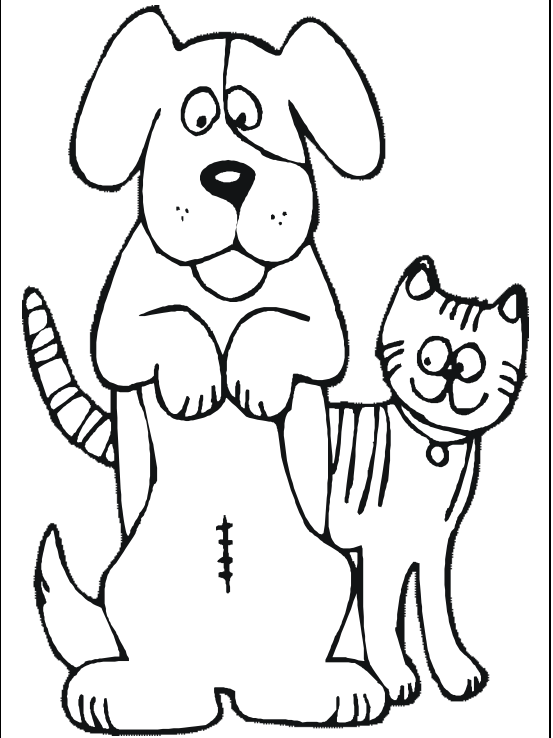
Your local animal shelter may have information about low-cost or subsidized neutering programs for pet owners needing financial assistance.

In some states, dog licensing agencies have lower fees for neutered than for unneutered dogs. Over the lifetime of the animal, this more than pays for the neutering costs.

Adapted from an original by: Humane Society of Jefferson Co. & Jefferson (WI) Veterinary Clinic.

Illustrations by Beverly Armstrong.

Quantities of this brochure may be ordered @ \$10/100 (\$ 8/100 if ordering 500 or more) by writing NYSHA, PO Box 3068, Kingston, NY 12402. Price includes shipping.

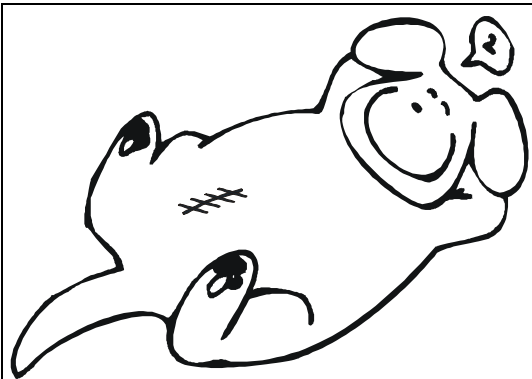


## PET SURGICAL STERILIZATION

### MYTHS & FACTS

**New York State Humane Association, Inc.**

PO Box 3068  
Kingston, NY 12402



MYTH: Won't neutering\* make my pets get fat and lazy?

### FACTS:

Animals get fat and lazy if they are:

1. fed too much
2. exercised too little

After surgical sterilization, it may be necessary to decrease the amount of food your cat or dog was used to eating.

Food requirements vary among pets. Factors affecting how much food your cat or dog needs are:

1. age
2. environmental temperature
3. activity level
4. metabolism

\* Although many people commonly distinguish between "spaying" for female animals and "neutering" for males, the term "neuter" actually applies to surgical sterilization for both males and females.

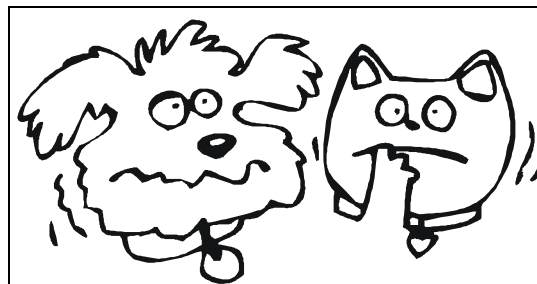


MYTH: Since I find homes for the litters, it's ok to let my pet give birth.

### FACTS:

*Whenever you allow a kitten or puppy to be born, you are responsible for the death of another animal.* Because of the tremendous overpopulation of dogs and cats, each time you give someone a puppy or kitten, a potential home is lost for one of the untold numbers of animals in shelters who must then be killed, or for one of the unfortunate animals abandoned in the streets by irresponsible owners — animals who will most probably die miserable deaths.

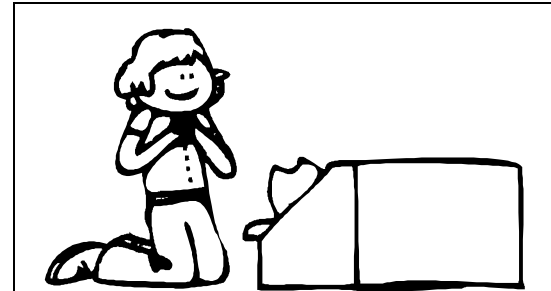
Moreover, there is rarely a guarantee that the puppy or kitten you give away will not be allowed to breed further, adding to the number of dogs and cats that will be put to death each year, or become strays.



MYTH: Isn't the surgery painful and dangerous?

### FACTS:

The surgery is performed under anesthesia and is painless. As with all surgery, precautions must be taken, but animals usually recuperate completely within a few days.



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

### FACTS:

The price in suffering of permitting the birth of a litter so that your children can witness this "miracle" is too high.

Millions of puppies and kittens are born every year in the United States. Most are unwanted. Many die on the streets; an estimated 8 to 12 million are taken to animal shelters. The average shelter can find responsible homes for only 25% - 35% of the animals taken in. The rest must be humanely killed.

The shelters are not to blame. They must dispose of surplus animals *because the public has failed to control the pet population.*

To allow the birth of a litter so that it can be witnessed by your children, is to teach your children irresponsibility. Instead, teach them a valuable lesson by explaining why their pet should not have "babies."

Responsible shelters take every possible measure to ensure the neutering of the animals they adopt out — even if it means adopting out fewer animals.

Be responsible, too: **DO NOT ALLOW YOUR PET TO REPRODUCE.**



MYTH: I shouldn't sterilize my purebred because I should help keep the breed going and make some money from the litters. I can always find homes for the litters.

### FACTS:

Being a purebred *does not* guarantee a loving, lifelong home. Typically, 25% of dogs surrendered to animal shelters are purebreds.

Those who breed purebred dogs or cats — and do it properly — rarely make a financial profit. Ensuring the health of the parents, as well as that of the puppies and kittens, requires regular veterinary care and genetic screening. Serious genetic defects that should not be perpetuated are associated with many popular breeds.

Be aware that the AKC "papers" *guarantee nothing* regarding the health, "quality," or even the breed of a pet. The pedigree papers simply indicate that an owner has affirmed to the AKC the identity and breed of the litter's dam and sire (mother and father.)

*Please keep in mind* that there is a limited number of good homes available. Whenever you find homes for the puppies or kittens you allow to be born, homes are lost for animals awaiting adoption in shelters.