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## WHEN AND WHY TO SPAY YOUR DOG.

As a responsible dog owner, it's important to understand the benefits of spaying your female dog. While population control is always something veterinary clinics advocate for, there are several other variables you should be taking into consideration. Female dogs have a much longer list of potential complications than the male dogs, and it's important to understand what they are so you can make an informed decision. Here are some key reasons why spaying your dog is so important:

- **Prevention of Unwanted Litters:** One of the most important reasons to spay your dog is to prevent unwanted litters. Each year, millions of dogs end up in animal shelters, and many are euthanized simply because there aren't enough homes for them. Spaying your dog helps to prevent this problem by ensuring that she can't have puppies. And no matter how responsible you may be, or how secure your yard is, we all know accidents happen.
- **Health Benefits:** Spaying your dog can also provide a few very important health benefits. Female dogs that are spayed before their 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> heat cycle have a significantly lower risk of developing certain types of cancer, such as ovarian and mammary cancers.
  - Spaying also eliminates the risk of developing a potentially life-threatening uterine infection called **Pyometra**. Pyometra is a bacterial infection that causes the uterus to become filled with pus. In severe cases, the uterus may even rupture, which is often fatal. The most effective treatment typically involves surgical removal of the infected uterus, along with antibiotics and supportive care. By spaying your dog, you can eliminate this risk entirely.
- **Behavioral Benefits:** Spaying your dog can also have behavioral benefits. Female dogs that are spayed are less likely to roam, run away, or exhibit territorial behaviors, such as marking their territory with urine. Spaying can also potentially reduce the likelihood of your dog getting into fights or other dangerous situations that may result from hormone changes.
- **Cost-Effective:** Finally, spaying your dog is a cost-effective way to minimize these risks! The cost of spaying is typically going to be much less than the cost of treating any of the medical conditions that can arise as a result of not spaying your dog.

### When is the best time for a female dog to be spayed?

Studies have shown that the risk of reproductive cancers increases greatly in dogs if they experience more than 2 heat cycles. So, the best time to spay tends to be **between 4 and 8 months of age, or soon after their first heat cycle**. The age at which a female dog gets it's first heat cycle (also known as estrus or the onset of puberty) can vary depending on the breed and individual dog. In general, small breed dogs tend to reach their first heat cycle earlier than larger breed dogs.

At Midtown Animal Clinic, we are committed to helping you provide the best possible care for your pet. If you have any questions about spaying your dog or would like to schedule an appointment, please don't hesitate to contact us.



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## WHEN AND WHY TO NEUTER YOUR DOG.

As a responsible dog owner, it's important to understand the benefits of neutering your male dog. While population control is always something veterinary clinics advocate for, there are other variables you should be taking into consideration. Male dogs have a much shorter list of potential complications compared to female dogs, and it's important to understand what they are so you can make an informed decision.

- **Prevention of unwanted litters:** One of the most important reasons to neuter your dog is to prevent unwanted litters. Each year, millions of dogs end up in animal shelters, and many are euthanized simply because there aren't enough homes for them. Neutering your dog helps to prevent this problem by ensuring that he can't have puppies. **We've seen male dogs impregnate female dogs when they are as young as 16 weeks old!** And no matter how responsible you may be, or how secure your yard is, we all know accidents happen.
- **Health Benefits:** Having your dog neutered means removing both testicles. With the testicles being removed, developing testicular cancer is no longer possible. As far as prostate cancer, the studies done have been contradictory. Some studies stating neutering will help to prevent prostate cancer, while other studies have come out with the exact opposite conclusion. So, prostate cancer isn't really something we can say is a reason to neuter your dog or not, as we still need more information.
- **Behavior Benefits:** Most neutered dogs tend to be less likely to escape, roam, and look for trouble. Most intact males will eventually seek out the opportunity to reproduce, and that sometimes means leaving home and following the scent that got their attention in the first place. Neutered dogs are also less likely to exhibit those unwanted behaviors we all know male dogs for, like marking their territory with urine, or "mounting" furniture or the legs of family members.
  - **We do typically see less of these behaviors post-neuter, if they haven't been showing the behavior for a long period of time beforehand.** If a 12 month old dog is having behavioral issues, it's not likely that neutering will have an affect on those behaviors or their personality. If a 4 month old puppy is showing signs of unwanted behavior, the neuter is more likely to have an impact, and prevent many of those habits from forming. **Timing is key if behavior is a concern.**

### When should I neuter my dog?

For dogs that have shown any signs of the unwanted male behavior, we recommend neutering early, **between 4 and 6 months old**. However if these behaviors are not a problem, the timing is very much up to you. Dr. Mac Kenzie does prefer the larger dogs hang on to their testosterone until they're fully grown (**12-18 months old**), in theory this gives them a better chance at developing all the muscle their large frame needs.

Again, neutering an adult dog is much less likely to change any behavioral problems, but it will immediately reduce the risk of litters and testicular cancer.

At Midtown Animal Clinic, we are committed to helping you provide the best possible care for your pet. If you have any questions about neutering your dog or would like to schedule an appointment, please don't hesitate to contact us.