

What does “spay” and “neuter” mean, anyway?

Spaying refers to the removal of the reproductive organs of female dogs and cats, while neutering is the removal of the testicles in male dogs and cats. The surgeries are always performed while the animal is under anesthesia. The animal may stay at the veterinarian’s office anywhere from a few hours to a few days, depending on the animal’s size, age and health. Depending on the procedure, the animal may need to have stitches removed after a few days.

How can spaying/neutering my pets be good for me and my family?

- Pets that are spayed/neutered are much more affectionate.
- Neutered males are less likely to spray or mark territory.
- Spaying eliminates the heat cycle in females. Estrus in dogs may last from 6-12 days and usually occurs twice a year. In cats the cycle lasts 6-7 days and usually occurs at least three times a year. Females in heat can cry constantly, show nervous behavior and attract unwanted males. In addition, heat cycles are messy and therefore it can be a hassle to keep your house and the pet clean.
- Intact animals exhibit many more behavior and temperament problems than those that are spayed or neutered. These problems can be very difficult to live with and treat.
- Spayed and neutered animals are **3 times less likely to bite!**
- Neutered males are less likely to roam, run away or get into fights.

How is spaying/neutering good for my pet?

- Cats and dogs that are spayed or neutered live longer and are healthier.
- Females that are spayed have no risk of getting uterine or ovarian cancer and a significantly reduced risk of getting breast cancer.
- Neutering eliminates testicular cancer and decreases the risk of prostate cancer.
- Spaying and neutering reduces many common behavior and health problems that can be very difficult and expensive to treat.

Now you're saying that spaying and neutering is good for the community!?

- Unsterilized animals produce many unwanted puppies and kittens **every week** just in our county! The Kent County Animal Shelter and the Humane Society of Kent County are inundated with puppies and kittens looking for homes simply because the owners didn't spay or neuter their pets. If you think that your one dog or cat couldn't make that much of a difference—**YOU'RE WRONG!**
- Because of these unwanted puppies and kittens, communities spend **millions of dollars** to care for lost, abandoned and unwanted pets—and millions more spent on euthanizing those that don't find homes.
- Animal shelters are overburdened with surplus animals.
- Stray and homeless cats and dogs get into garbage, defecate on lawns and in public areas and threaten wildlife and livestock.
- They threaten the health and safety of the community and our pets. They may carry rabies, cause cat accidents and bite/scratch people and pets.

Spay or neuter surgery is a **one-time cost** that is very miniscule when compared to the monetary costs of potential behavior, health and temperament problems and caring for puppies and kitten. In addition to monetary costs, it is difficult to deal with a pet that has these problems and it can be hard to find homes for the puppies and kittens. **The benefits of these surgeries far outweigh the cost of the surgery.** It is a very small price to pay for the health of your pet and the prevention of more unwanted animals.