



GLASTONBURY

The Importance of Neutering your Pet

Whether you are the proud owner of a new kitten or a puppy or you have recently taken on an older pet neutering (which is to say spaying in females and castration in males) is an important subject deserving careful thought.

In the wild of course no animal is neutered and wild cats and dogs will breed at regular intervals throughout their lives. The situation with pets is different however and far from a natural one. We, as owners, have taken responsibility for providing the animal in our care with food, warmth and shelter; we will take steps to prevent illness where possible, treat it if it is injured or ill and also control whether it will breed or not.

The problem is that an animal which retains the ability to breed but is prevented from doing so can develop serious, sometimes life threatening health problems as a result, including cancers, infections and cysts. The answer to the problem is simple - have your pet neutered.

Neutering not only provides health benefits for the individual pet, it rules out the possibility of accidental pregnancies thereby reducing the number of unwanted puppies and kittens (the RSPCA took in over 1500 unwanted cats and dogs in December 2006 in England and Wales alone).

Neutering also minimises the tendency to wander off to find potential breeding partners and reduces the incidence of fights over territory or mates. In bitches seasons and false pregnancies are abolished and in female cats (queens) 'calling' behaviour, which can persist almost continually for long periods, is prevented. Neutering of cats of either sex will reduce the likelihood of infection with cat leukaemia and AIDS.

Contrary to what is occasionally claimed neutering will not change the character of our pets, nor will it cause obesity - the only thing that will make an animal fat is too much food! Furthermore there is absolutely no benefit to an animal in having a litter, it won't make them more contented or friendly, neither will it stop false pregnancies in bitches. In fact there are considerable risks when an animal breeds. Some births require a caesarean operation and womb and breast infections are all too common following a litter. In some cases these complications will render a mother incapable of raising the litter meaning they will have to be hand reared which involves 2 hourly feeds night and day and results in very poor survival rates in the puppies or kittens. Conversely, there are very few drawbacks to neutering and they are generally minor, easily managed or cosmetic - see our information on bitch spaying for more details.

So, please give the subject some consideration. Find out as much as you can, have a look at our web site or speak to a vet or nurse for more specific information on your pet.