



## **Desexing (Speying/Neutering)**

Many puppies and kittens were born over the summer and now you will need to be thinking about whether or not to desex them and when is best. We recommend all puppies and kittens be at least 6 months of age, and adults can be desexed at any age if they are healthy. Like most cities - Auckland has a big stray dog problem: thousands of unwanted dogs, puppies, cats and kittens are destroyed each year by the SPCA and the pound.

### Dogs

Neutering your female or male puppy is the first step in population control. These operations do not change a dog's basic personality. Spaying a female dog involves the removal of both the ovaries and uterus. This prevents her from coming into heat or becoming pregnant. It also significantly reduces the chances of her developing mammary and uterine cancers, and pyometra which is a very serious infection of the uterus, which can be fatal. Allowing your female dog to have a litter before she is spayed contributes to the stray population significantly and also dramatically increases her chances of pyometra or mammary cancers. Neutering (castrating) a male dog involves the removal of both testicles. This does not change his basic personality but reduces the chance of him wandering, becoming aggressive, urine marking or displaying embarrassing sexual behaviour. It also greatly reduces the incidence of some types of cancer, prostatic disease, and hernias.

### **We recommend desexing female dogs (bitches) because:**

There are many health benefits:

- mammary tumour/cancer prevention (if she is neutered before her first heat -usually about 6-8 months of age) then she is very unlikely to develop mammary cancer. Even if she has had her first heat, then it is still a good idea to desex her because mammary cancers are stimulated by oestrogen. 1 in 4 dogs undesexed dogs get mammary tumours. Having puppies does not prevent this.
- pyometra prevention - this is a life threatening infection of the uterus that middle aged to older dogs often develop about 6 weeks following heat. **1 in 4 females that have survived to 10 years will get it. Without treatment dogs die. Treatment is expensive and usually involves surgery but dogs are at risk of not surviving the surgery. Desexing prevents this.** Signs of pyometra include loss of appetite, lethargy, vomiting, excessive thirst, vaginal discharge. Having puppies increases the risk. (See information sheet on Pyometra.)

### Benefits to owner

- she won't go on heat - usually about every 6-8 months. She usually produces a bloody discharge and sometimes an offensive odour.
- less likely to attract male dog attention.
- no unexpected litters of puppies.

## **We recommend desexing male dogs because:**

There are many health benefits:

- prevention of testicular and anal tumours.
- prevention of benign prostatic hyperplasia (older dogs often get enlarged prostates with the influence of testosterone which can be painful and interfere with toileting).
- prevention of prostatic infections.

Prevents testosterone influenced urges!

- dogs often roam (leave the property and wander) when they can smell female dogs in heat. This gets eliminated in 90% of neutered dogs.
- urine marking is eliminated in 50% of neutered dogs.
- aggressive behaviour towards other male dogs gets eliminated in 60% of neutered dogs.
- inappropriate mounting is eliminated in 70% of neutered dogs.

## Cats

Like most cities Auckland has a big cat overpopulation problem. Thousands of unwanted and stray cats are destroyed by the SPCA each year. These operations do not change a cat's basic personality. Spaying a female cat involves the removal of both the ovaries and uterus. This prevents her from coming into heat or becoming pregnant and also totally eliminates the chance of ovarian cancers and reduces the chances of mammary cancer. Neutering a male cat involves the removal of both testicles. This will also totally eliminate the chance of testicular cancers. Cats which are not neutered or spayed are much more likely to stray from home, get into fights which can cause abscesses, pick up infectious diseases such as FIV (Feline Immunodeficiency Virus), and develop undesirable habits such as spraying.