

STERILISATION IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO!

By Imogen Tarita - Cluny Animal Trust



Why is it important to sterilise your dog?

We hate to start this article on a sour note, but did you know that over one million unwanted (but healthy) cats and dogs are euthanised in South Africa every single year, simply because there aren't enough homes to go around? These numbers are, quite frankly, horrifying! But it makes sense and puts into perspective why there are hundreds of animals that rescue organisations across SA are desperate to find homes for.

The Cluny Animal Trust is working very hard to combat the pet overpopulation in the Free State, where we operate; but don't be fooled, this is a very serious problem across our entire country.

To put these stats into perspective, if we were to solve the problem right this minute, you'd go home tonight and have 15 dogs and 45 cats in your house! Just imagine if you're a family of four – that would mean that you'd have 60 dogs and 180 cats in your house tonight!

THE HEALTHY CHOICE

In addition to having a huge impact on animal overpopulation, pet sterilisations are also important to your pet's health. So, if it's this important, why then is the message getting lost, and why are animals not being sterilised? The answer to this is simple:

many people are ignorant about the many benefits of neutering animals, i.e. spaying (female) or castrating (male), and they believe in the myths, rumours and falsehoods that circulate around this very important procedure, so we hope that this article addresses some of them and helps to set the record straight!

Myth – Spaying or castrating my pet is expensive.

Fact – The cost of your pet's neuter surgery is far less than the cost of having and caring for a litter! Plus, there are many organisations across SA offering low-cost sterilisations, or why not chat to your local vet about a discount (you'll never know if you don't ask). Or perhaps chat about a layaway plan (we have heard about this being done)... there really is no excuse!

Myth – Every female animal should have at least one litter.

Fact – There's no medical evidence to justify or support allowing a dog or cat to have a litter before spaying them. And every litter counts and adds to the overpopulation! In fact, evidence shows that females spayed before their first heat cycle are typically healthier. Many veterinarians now sterilise dogs and cats as young as 10 weeks of age.

Myth – My dog/cat will feel "less masculine" if he's castrated.

Fact – This myth always makes

us laugh, and this is why vets like no balls! Pets don't have any concept of ego or sexual identity, so neutering your dog or cat won't change that.

Myth – Spaying and castrating is unhealthy for pets.

Fact – Just the opposite! Neutering your male animals helps to prevent testicular cancer and some prostate problems. Plus, they'll be less likely to spray and mark their territory. Spaying your female pets prevents uterine infections and reduces the occurrence of breast tumours, which can be malignant or cancerous in about 50% of dogs and 90% of cats.

We hope that this article has been of some help, and although not an exhaustive list of myth busters, if you're in doubt, please ask a qualified veterinarian for advice.

By sterilising your pet, they'll live a longer and healthier life. You'll also make a positive impact on your community, and you'll be helping to prevent unwanted puppies and kittens from being put to sleep simply because they're unwanted.

In the end, please remember that the only balls a dog needs are the ones he fetches when you're playing with him.

Spay and neuter your pets! For more information, visit www.clunyanimaltrust.co.za 