



## Spaying and Neutering dogs

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Every year thousands of dogs have to be euthanased because they are unwanted. However this problem can be curtailed by owners sterilizing and neutering their pets.

Unfortunately sterilization and neutering of dogs can be a very emotional issue for owners when it should not be. Many people decide not to sterilize their dogs, male and female, for the wrong reasons. The reasons for breeding with their dogs are usually one of the following.

- She is such a nice dog; it will be great to have one of her puppies. She will not be mature until she has had a litter of puppies.
- I need him for protection and if he is neutered he will not be aggressive enough to protect me.
- The breeder says my dog is from a rare line, I signed a contract with the breeder saying that I can not sterilise my dogs so that the breeder can use my dog to breed with at a later stage.
- My dogs have good pedigrees; I should be able to sell the puppies easily.
- Pedigree dogs sell for lots of money so I can make lots of money out of breeding with dogs.

There are many more reasons that I have not listed.

Half of a puppies' genetics comes from the father and half comes from mother, therefore a puppy character is never the same as the mother or the father. You will be disappointed because the puppy will not necessarily look like or have the same character as its parents.

The character of male dogs is influenced by testosterone. Testosterone is known to cause aggressive unpredictable behaviour in male dogs. Therefore neutering a dog will make male dogs less aggressive and make their behaviour far more predictable. Owners often want an aggressive dog because of the miss conception that an aggressive dog makes a good guard dog. The problem is that aggressive dogs are unpredictable and can attack you and your family. A dog like this is a liability and not a guard dog. An intact dog is more inclined to roam the neighbourhood looking for dogs in season. A guard dog is useless if it is not in your property.



A neutered dog will still alert you when a strange person enters your property and a neutered dog is equally scary to an intruder as an intact dog. The main difference is that an neutered dog will not follow a dog in season and therefore will remain at home which is what you want from a guard dog. His behaviour will also be more predictable and therefore less of a liability to you as the owner.

It is very important to remember that you as the owner of the dog are ultimately responsible for your dog's behaviour and therefore can be held legally responsible if your dog bites somebody. No contract with a breeder stating that you may not neuter a dog will save you from prosecution if your dog bites somebody. The breeder should rather keep the dog that he/she wants to breed with later rather than bullying you into taking it and putting you under the false impression that you may not neuter the dog because you have a contract with the breeder.

Many people use the excuse that their dog has an impressive pedigree; therefore they will easily sell the puppies. You only need to visit animal shelters in your area to see how many unwanted puppies are looking for homes. Many of these puppies were bred from dogs with good pedigrees. If you feel you have a dog that is a good example of the breed then you must be prepared to prove it. This can be done by putting the time in to train your dogs for competitions like breed shows, working trails, field trials, gun dog trails etc. and only once your dog has proved that it is a good example of the breed then you can consider breeding with your dog. However you must still be prepared to take responsibility for every puppy you sell and if that dog is not looked after properly then you as the breeder must be prepared to take the dog back. If you are not prepared to do this then you must rather spay/ neuter your dog and drop the idea of breeding with your dog.

Every time an intact bitch goes into season her chances of developing mammary cancer increase tenfold and her chances of developing uterine cancer or uterine infections also increase. The chance of intact male dogs developing prostate cancer in later life is high and like in human males, dogs also suffer from "ou mans klier" i.e. the prostates of intact male dogs can develop benign prostatic hyperplasia which in lay terms means an increase in the size of the prostate. The dog's prostate like the human prostate surrounds the urethra which is the tube that the urine travels through from the bladder to the outside when the dog urinates. Blockage of this tube will lead to retention cystitis. This is caused by urine that remains in the bladder too long and causes inflammation of the bladder wall. The hyperplastic prostate can also become infected. All the above conditions lead to a very sick dog. The only way to get these dogs healthy is to operate on them.

However as the dog gets older the risk of complications from giving the animal an anaesthetic increases. Therefore if you wait for a dog to show symptoms of one of the above mentioned conditions before having your dog sterilised then your dog will be a double anaesthetic risk because your dog will be older and your dog will be ill from cancer or infection or both. The risk of your dog dying under anaesthetic is therefore very high.

Looking after one dog properly, i.e. giving the dog good quality food, quality shelter, quality veterinary care etc. is expensive. Therefore looking after multiple dogs as is the case with breeders is extremely expensive. For this reason good breeders breed dogs for the love of dogs and not for the money, they do not make much money out of breeding dogs. Many



welfare shelters are full of dogs confiscated from puppy farmers who thought they could make money from breeding dogs.

If you are not prepared to take responsibility for all the dogs that you breed. If you are not prepared to spend the money in looking after all the dogs in your care, i.e. to give them good quality food, prepared to pay for the veterinary care of your dogs. For example if you are not prepared to pay the cost of a caesarean section if your bitch requires one, then I strongly advise you as a dog owner to do the responsible thing and sterilize/neuter your pets.

Good breeders will only produce a letter when they have booking for all the pups in in a litter. This ensures that they can find good homes for all the puppies they breed.

Rather be a responsible pet owner and sterilize/neuter you dog and enjoy your dogs and leave breeding up to the people who are prepared to do it properly. This will help prevent dogs from being needlessly destroyed every year because they are unwanted.

