



Your New Dog: Vet Care and Spaying or Neutering

Making sure your canine companion is in good physical condition should be one of your utmost concerns. It is important that you take your new dog for an initial visit and discuss any medical or health concerns you may have with your veterinarian. If you haven't yet decided who will be your regular veterinarian, call veterinarians in your area, or ask for recommendations from the local SPCA or friends and family.

Dogs adopted from SPCAs in Nova Scotia typically have received a de-worming and a basic booster that covers most of the common viruses applicable to dogs. Your adopted dog will most likely have been spayed or neutered. Depending on the season, your dog may have also received a flea prevention treatment. All of this information should be documented in your dog's health record, which you should take with you to all of your veterinary appointments.

Veterinary care varies greatly from traditional views and methods, to holistic vets with alternative treatments. Some vets may specialize in certain breeds or skills. Veterinary services, such as hours of operation and cost, may also play a factor in determining which clinic you will attend. It is important to become familiar with the local veterinary emergency clinic. Many emergency incidents involving dogs will occur at the most inopportune times, like late in the evening or on a Sunday when your regular veterinary clinic is closed.

Spaying and Neutering

Spaying and neutering are surgical procedures performed by qualified veterinarians that prevent pets from reproducing. Female animals are spayed, which consists of removing the uterus and ovaries. Male pets are neutered, which consists of removing the testicles (also known as castration).

The greatest preventable cruelty inflicted upon cats, dogs, and rabbits, is pet overpopulation, which leads to thousands of unnecessary deaths each year through euthanasia. We can put an end to this by having our pets spayed and neutered by the time of

sexual maturity (4-6 months) or earlier as recommended by your veterinarian. Below are answers to common questions that pet owners have about spaying and neutering:

Does it hurt my dog?

Your dog will receive general anaesthetic and will not feel anything during the surgery. After the surgery, some pets show signs of mild discomfort for the first day or two. Many veterinarians will recommend that you keep your pet quiet for the first few days or up to one week, depending on your pet's sex, age or other factors.

Will my female will be nicer, mellow, or healthier if she has a litter of puppies first?

There is no scientific proof that letting a female animal give birth to a litter will do any of the above. Allowing your female to reproduce is a risky and often complicated undertaking. Breeding and whelping is very time and financially intensive when done correctly. It requires around the clock care, and complications could lead to the death of the puppies or even the beloved mother, costing you thousands in medical care and leaving you emotionally drained.

Will it change my dog's personality?

Generally, no. For female animals there is typically no change aside from no longer experiencing heat cycles. For male animals there is generally a reduction in aggressive behaviours. Some pets will be more relaxed without the drive to reproduce.

Will it affect my dog's health if I don't have them spayed or neutered?

Yes. Unaltered female dogs run an increased risk of life threatening medical problems, including uterine infections and mammary tumours. Unaltered male dogs run an increased risk of life threatening testicular and rectal tumours. An intact male dog can travel far and wide in search of a female in heat. A wandering dog is not only illegal but will endanger their own lives and create problems for you and your neighbours.