

Sterilising pets: your questions answered

1. 'It's too expensive to have my pet sterilised. I can't afford it.'

If you can't afford to take your pet to a vet for spaying or neutering, organisations like the SPCA – and others – offer a low-cost sterilisation service. Unsterilised animals are at risk of contracting more diseases and injuries – which will cost a lot of money in vet's bills. Rather have your dog or cat spayed or neutered at six months of age.

2. 'Isn't it better for females to have a litter first, before they're spayed?'

Definitely not. It's better for animals to be spayed before they have the chance to fall pregnant and give birth. This helps prevent many of the health risks of pregnancy and birth. There is no benefit to letting a pet have one litter first – quite the opposite!

3. 'I want my children to see the miracle of birth.'

There are excellent educational resources such as books and DVDs that explain the birth process. There's no need to use an animal for this purpose!

Also, if you want to demonstrate the 'miracle of birth' by bringing yet more animals into this over-populated world, then you should also illustrate the reality of death – since thousands of animals are 'put down' because of irresponsible breeding.

4. 'It's unnatural to sterilise animals.'

Dogs and cats were domesticated hundreds of years ago and don't live in the wild – so there's nothing unnatural about safeguarding their health and welfare through sterilisation. What's unnatural is the premature deaths of healthy dogs and cats – through euthanasia – for no other reason than the lack of homes for them.

5. 'I find homes for all the puppies/kittens, so what's the problem?'

Very few puppies or kittens will stay in the same home for life. Most often, they're given away when their 'cuteness' wears off – and they're not sterilised, either – so they end up having litters of their own and the whole sad cycle is repeated. Think further than 'finding homes': the animals will eventually pay the price for this short-sightedness.

6. 'It isn't my responsibility. The SPCA finds homes for animals, anyway.'

As a member of society, the suffering of animals – and other vulnerable groups – is everyone's problem. The abuse, neglect and irresponsible breeding of pets is part of a deeper disregard for the sanctity of life. The most helpless members of society – like pets, children and the elderly – need protection, no matter whose 'responsibility' they are. The SPCA cannot find homes for all the animals placed in its care: there are simply too many pets and too few homes. And not any home is a good home – as the many reports of cruelty prove.

7. 'It's not necessary to sterilise males. They don't breed.'

Nonsense. Male pets are a big part of the problem. They impregnate female animals, and many injuries, accidents and fights are caused by intact (unsterilised) male dogs and cats who stray from their homes or in pursuit of females on heat. Neutering a male dog or cat is a simple procedure which also has health and behaviour benefits.



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There's no excuse for not having your pet spayed or neutered. Please don't let an old wives' tale or silly story stop you from doing the best thing for your pet.

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