

Reasons to opt for early-age spaying/neutering:

- ♥ Helps to control pet overpopulation - less homeless offspring
- ♥ Decreases the rate of animals returned to shelter
- ♥ Decreases killed animals
- ♥ Improves animal's adoptability
- ♥ Improved health care of pets
- ♥ Surgery less stressful/quick recovery for younger animals
- ♥ Early spay/neuter can be done in conjunction with other surgeries
- ♥ Spayed and neutered pets are less aggressive, less likely to roam, less likely to fight and therefore less likely to contract contagious diseases

But remember, it is never too late to spay or neuter your pet. Talk with your veterinarian. Even older animals benefit from these procedures.

The National Humane Education Society joins other organizations in supporting early-age spaying/neutering: American Humane Association, American Veterinary Medical Association, The American Kennel Club, MSPCA's Angell Memorial Hospital, The Royal SPCA of England, and many other local humane societies and animal control facilities.

**One final note.** Nearly 64% of the animals who enter U.S. shelters are killed. *Please* be responsible and spay or neuter your pet.



*Fostering a sentiment of kindness to animals*

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*Presented by The National Humane Education Society*



# Early-Age Spay/ Neuter



Early-age spaying/neutering is being performed more and more frequently and the range of benefits provided for both animals and people is great. Research has proven that it is safe to spay and neuter kittens and puppies at a much earlier age than veterinarians once thought. Many veterinarians are now safely and routinely performing spay and neuter surgery on kittens and puppies at eight weeks of age. Low body fat makes these surgeries easier to accomplish and puppies and kittens tolerate the procedures very well and recover more quickly than do older animals. Some veterinarians use the “two pound” guideline. As long as a puppy or kitten is healthy and weighs *at least* two pounds, they may be spayed or neutered safely.



What is spaying/neutering?

Spaying/neutering are safe, inexpensive and permanent procedures that not only prevent accidental breeding but also reduce potential behavioral and health problems. A female cat does not have to go through the heat cycle before being spayed. In fact, multiple heat cycles increase her chances of developing mammary cancer. In males, neutering reduces the risk of testicular cancer and

enlargement of the prostate and related infections.

Many animals adopted from shelters are young in age. Studies have shown that if these animals are not spayed/neutered before going into their new homes, many will never be done and these animals then produce more unwanted pets. When these procedures of spaying/neutering are performed early the chance of unwanted litters is eliminated. These animals are not going to contribute to the surplus pet population of tomorrow.

The American Veterinary Medical Association has adopted a resolution that endorses the concept of early-age spay/neuter to stem the overpopulation of cats and dogs. The sponsors of the resolution are convinced that the early-age approach will reduce the killing of unwanted pets by preventing unwanted litters and by making shelter policies of “neuter before adoption” more effective. The resolution states, “Resolved, that AVMA supports the concept of early (8-16 weeks of age) ovariohysterectomies/gonadectomies in dogs and cats, in an effort to stem the overpopulation in these species.”



Some adjustment of technique is needed on the part of the veterinarian when operating on puppies and kittens, but research

shows that performing surgery on a very young animal is no more difficult and may be easier because of less body fat than an older one. During these surgeries, young animals need to be carefully monitored just as older animals do when it comes to anesthesia. Pediatric concerns for kittens and puppies include: hypothermia, hypoglycemia and stress.

There really is little scientific information to back up the current standard age of six to eight months for spaying/neutering. This figure seems to have been chosen quite arbitrarily and followed down through the years without question. Today, we recognize the safety and many benefits of early-age spay/neuter.

NHES's position:

The National Humane Education Society (NHES) supports the concept of early-age spaying/neutering (at least eight weeks of age/or two pounds in weight) in healthy, vaccinated kittens and puppies.

Although there is concern regarding limited research available on the physical, behavioral and long-term effects of early-age spaying/neutering, NHES believes that these procedures have a positive and immediate affect on reducing the serious pet overpopulation problem and therefore should be implemented nationwide.