

Spaying or Neutering Your Pet



Why spay or neuter your pet?

Spaying or neutering helps your pet live a longer, healthier life, minimizes behavior problems, and helps control the population of unwanted pets. Here's how:

- **Health** – Neutering male pets decreases their chances of developing prostatic enlargement and disease and eliminates the risk of testicular cancer. Spaying female pets eliminates the risk of pyometra, a life-threatening infection of the uterus. If your pet is spayed before her first heat cycle, her chances of developing breast cancer drop dramatically as well.
- **Behavior** – Behavior problems are the primary reason pet owners take their pets to shelters, and pets that haven't been spayed or neutered are more likely to exhibit undesirable behaviors. For example, female cats can be very disruptive and vocal during their heat cycle, and male pets may roam, mark, sexually mount and become aggressive. By neutering your puppy or kitten at six months or younger, you've taken the first step toward preventing aggression. The next step is puppy socialization training. Ask your veterinary team for more information on puppy training classes at PetSmart®.
- **Birth control** – The drive to reproduce is strong in dogs and cats that haven't been spayed or neutered and can lead to unwanted reproduction. By spaying or neutering your pet when you have decided not to raise puppies or kittens (a very big job), you can do your part to limit the chances of pet overpopulation and avoid dealing with a surprise pregnancy. According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, nearly 12,500 puppies are born in the United States each hour. More than 1 million stray dogs and 500,000 stray cats live in the New York City metropolitan area alone. Spaying or neutering your pet eliminates unwanted litters, which contribute to thousands of owner-requested euthanasias and millions of stray animals. PetSmart also does its part: The PetSmart Charities' Adoption Center helps find families for thousands of homeless pets each year.

Keeping surgery safe

Even though there is some risk with any anesthetic procedure or surgery, we're committed to providing the highest quality surgical care, made as painless as possible, and we follow up with the finest postoperative care anywhere. How do we do it?

Complete examinations – We'll examine your pet from nose to tail before surgery upon recovering from anesthesia and two weeks after the operation to be sure your pet is in good health going in to the procedure and healing properly afterward.

Comprehensive laboratory analysis – Our lab analysis includes an internal organ function screen and a complete blood count, which help us find any preexisting conditions that could cause complications during anesthesia, surgery or recovery.

General anesthesia – We use the newest anesthetic agents approved for veterinary care, sevoflurane and propofol. Together, they provide your pet with the safest anesthesia that leads to a shorter recovery. These are also the most common anesthetic agents used in human surgeries, which means we're giving your pet the kind of care you would expect for anyone in your family. Sterile instruments, drapes and surgical gowns. Careful attention to sterility limits the possibility of infection during the procedure.

Continual cardiac and blood oxygen monitoring – During surgery and recovery, these monitoring devices help detect potential problems before they become serious.

Intravenous catheter – An intravenous catheter allows safe, easy administration of any necessary medications or fluids.

Intravenous fluid therapy – Intravenous fluid therapy helps ensure your pet's blood pressure remains within its normal range during anesthesia.

For additional information, please contact your Banfield medical team.

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Pain medication – Pain treatment speeds recovery and keeps your pet as comfortable as possible during this stressful time.

All-day stay – During this time, the hospital team monitors your pet's recovery, performs postoperative exams and removes the catheter.

Avoiding risk factors – We recommend spaying or neutering before six months of age because pets that are older, in heat, pregnant or overweight are at higher risk.

When is the perfect time?

At Banfield, we like to give your pet time to grow and become a healthy young member of the family before spaying or neutering, and we recommend that your pet be fully vaccinated. Our veterinary team generally recommends surgery when the pet is between 4 and 6 months old. If you participate in the Banfield Optimum Wellness Plans® for puppies and kittens, we automatically plan the surgery at the best time for your pet.

If you want to breed or show your pet, you may want to delay spaying or neutering. If that's the case, we can help you decide when the time is right and even help you raise a litter. As godparents to thousands of puppies and kittens, we encourage you to find adoptive parents for them before the breeding takes place. Be sure to provide breeding and prenatal care for your pet. Consult your Banfield veterinarian for help with these important issues.



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