



SKILLMAN - (214) 887-1400

1910 Skillman Street
Dallas, TX 75206

OAK CLIFF - (214) 939-1600

1021 Fort Worth Avenue
Dallas, TX 75208

WHITE ROCK - (214) 324-1500

7446 East Grand Avenue
Dallas, TX 75214

SPAYING AND NEUTERING: BENEFITS AND TIMING

Caitlin Spillers, DVM

Determining what age to spay or neuter your pet is an important decision that your veterinarian can help you make! While it may seem like a simple answer, there is a lot that goes into the recommendation and the appropriate age to consider this for your little one. This paper outlines the age recommendations and benefits of spaying and neutering.

Benefits of Spaying/Neutering Your Pet:

- Population control and preventing unwanted pregnancies
- Eliminates risk of testicular cancer in males and ovarian/uterine cancer in females
- Greatly reduces the risk of mammary cancer in females (the risk of mammary cancer increases each heat cycle your pet goes through!)
- Help prevent unwanted secondary hormone-driven behaviors such as mounting, roaming, or aggression
- Eliminates the risk of a life threatening uterine infection (called pyometra)
- Complying with city ordinances: City of Dallas requires spaying or neutering your pet by 6 months of age

What Age Should I Spay or Neuter My Pet?

Cats - The general consensus amongst veterinarians is that both male and female cats are recommended to be spayed or neutered at 4 months of age or older. The risks of waiting until a later age to spay or neuter them are listed above, but there are no known major benefits of waiting until an older age to spay and neuter cats.

Dogs - There are many factors to consider when deciding the best age to spay or neuter your dog. First off, is your pet exposed to other intact (not spayed or neutered) animals? If so, they could potentially mate and create a litter of unwanted puppies. There are already a very high number of unwanted dogs in Dallas, and it is our responsibility as pet owners to help prevent that number from increasing even further. In this case, considering a younger age may be more ideal.

There is some research that supports that allowing dogs to grow to skeletal maturity (9-18 months, depending on the breed) increases their joint and long bone health and decreases their risks of bone cancers later in life. However, while waiting for them to become skeletally mature, one must also consider the increased risk of uterine infections and mammary cancer in females, and testicular cancers and prostate disease in males.

We understand that choosing the right age to spay or neuter your dog can be challenging, and we strongly encourage consulting your pet's veterinarian to determine the time that is best for your pet.

For example, large breed dogs have a higher risk of experiencing bone and joint problems or bone cancers later in life and, therefore, the benefit of waiting until they have reached skeletal maturity to spay or neuter them may outweigh the risks. Small breed dogs do not commonly experience an abundance of long bone and joint problems or bone cancers. Therefore, spaying or neutering them at a younger age, roughly 6 months, is commonly considered an opportune time to avoid other potential risks associated with being intact longer. Your veterinarian will be able to use your dog's breed and lifestyle as a guideline for helping you make this decision. 