

Should young puppies be fixed?

It seems the decision of when to spay or neuter a pet continues to be a point of much controversy between pet owners and veterinary professionals across the country. I regularly hear from new pet owners that receive a new puppy that has been “fixed” already and are concerned because their veterinarian has told them that a dog should never be “fixed” before it is six months of age. So when is an “ideal” time to spay/neuter your pet? The answer to that may not be as simple as it sounds.

With the continuing pressure from the press, daytime TV shows, and the HSUS (Humane Society), more and more professional pet breeders are offering to spay/neuter pets that they are selling prior to shipment. This can be a real win-win situation with new pet owners. First, the typical price of an ovario-hysterectomy (spay) anywhere in the US other than the mid-west can range from \$150-\$500+. The new owner often will be very excited that you offer a pet that has already had the procedure done prior to shipment for a much lesser cost than what they will have to pay from their veterinarian. Secondly, anytime that an animal is placed under anesthesia there are some minimal risk to the life of the animal. Though the risk is minimal, there is a possibility that this new pet could go to its new home, be taken to the new owner’s veterinarian, and have complications during the surgical procedure. Many times these new owners will call you wanting to know what you can do about this. By offering to have these procedures done prior to shipment you personally take the risk of surgical complications but you have the comfort of having the procedure done by your veterinarian that you trust and typically at a fraction of the cost the new owner will have to pay.

Many people have heard stories about why a pet should not be neutered younger than six months. Did you know that the AVMA (American Veterinary Medical Association), AAHA (American Animal Hospital Association), AKC, & HSUS all **SUPPORT** early spay/neuter of your pet. So why do many veterinarians refuse to do young pets? I believe that it is due to the comfort level of that veterinarian. Is it wrong that they refuse to do a pet until it is six months? No, it is just what they are comfortable doing. I am a big proponent of early spay/neuter. The benefits to the puppy of the early spay/neuter are numerous. I have seen thousands of neuters between 6-10 weeks of age do great through life and never have any medical complications. I have seen many pups that are spayed between 7-12 weeks of age that become super well behaved dogs with no medical complications. So, I would ask, can you do your part to help control pet overpopulation by offering pets that have been spayed or neutered? The benefits go far beyond just additional revenue for you, they can help continue to show how responsible professional pet breeders are. There are too many other benefits to mention about early spay and neuter but you can find some really interesting thoughts about this at: <http://earlyspayneuter.blogspot.com>

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