



## **The Importance of Spaying/Neutering your Pet**

by  
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Breeding dogs is a very complicated business. Reputable breeders trace genetic lines back many generations, mindful of traits that are desirable and *not* desirable. They breed for temperament as well as conformation. The practice of breeding should not be taken lightly. As wonderful as you feel your puppy is, it is not reasonable to expect that breeding her will produce an adorable carbon copy!

### **Behavior Issues**

There are many behaviors that are not just a nuisance but potentially dangerous with an unaltered animal. Both sexes are more likely to roam in search of a mate, risking injury by traffic and other animals as well as exposure to disease. Depending on breed, bitches go into estrus every seven months on average, lasting about three weeks. The temporary behavior changes associated with going into heat, along with discharge and howling, can be quite disruptive to the human family. In addition, an unaltered female will attract the attentions of males for miles around and will be unsettling in gatherings of dogs. At puberty, unaltered males begin to mark their territory, which they will do inside their homes as well as outside; it is not easy to change this habit as the dog gets older. Also, an unaltered male tends to attract aggressive behavior from neutered males, which puts the dog at risk of injury.

### **Health Risks**

Failing to alter your dog can also have health implications. Unspayed females run a higher risk of mammary cancer, a very dangerous cancer, as well as pyometra, an infection of the uterus. Unneutered males run a higher risk of testicular cancer as well as prostate disease and certain types of hernias as they get older.

### **The Overpopulation Epidemic**

Accidental breeding is happening in epidemic proportions, meaning that there are many wonderful, lovable, and yet unloved dogs in the world. Shelters have the heartbreaking mission of choosing which can live and which will die. Count yourself lucky to be graced with the wonderful dog you have and cherish the time you have together, as it *is* finite. No puppy, not even her own, can ever replace her.