

FRIENDS OF DOGS/PRIJATELJI PASA FACT SHEET 4



MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT SPAYING AND NEUTERING

Regardless of how much time you have to be involved directly in the shelter, we all have a role to play in prevention by:

- Raising awareness of the need to sterilise cats and dogs
- Sterilising our own and neighbourhood strays
- Avoiding illegal breeders who may tempt you with the latest designer dog for an inflated fee, when there are lots of free dogs waiting for a home at the shelter. Highly bred dogs can also be more likely to have health and behaviour problems, especially if from un-licensed breeders.

It is great to feed stray cats and dogs, but don't forget that healthier animals are more likely to get pregnant and if you don't neuter the animals in your neighborhood they will multiply. We can all help to reduce the stray dog and cat population by taking stray animals in our areas to be neutered.

MYTH: My pet will get fat and lazy.

FACT: The truth is that most pets get fat and lazy because their owners feed them too much and don't give them enough exercise. Spayed or neutered pets require less calories. More exercise will benefit both of you.

MYTH: It's better to have one litter first.

FACT: Medical evidence indicates just the opposite. In fact, the evidence shows that females spayed before their first heat are typically healthier and happier and live longer.

MYTH: My children/dogs should experience the miracle of birth.

FACT: But will they? Even if children are able to see a pet give birth — which is unlikely, since it usually occurs at night and in seclusion — the lesson they will really learn is that animals can be created and discarded as it suits adults. Explain to children that preventing the birth of some pets can save the lives of others. And dogs are dogs, they will not know they are missing anything!

MYTH: But my pet is a purebred, and I want to breed it.

FACT: A large percentage of pets brought to animal shelters are purebreds. There are just too many dogs and cats — mixed breed and purebred. In areas where dog breeding is highly controlled or even illegal there are far fewer stray cats and dogs. Breeding just makes more dogs, when there are enough looking for homes already. Dogs should not be used as money making machines.

MYTH: I want my dog to be protective.

FACT: Spaying or neutering does not affect a dog's natural tendency to "defend his own turf". Male dogs will also be less likely to wander once they are neutered.

MYTH: I don't want my male dog or cat to feel like less of a male.

FACT: Don't confuse your emotional needs and relationships with your pet's instinctive hormonal responses. Pets don't have any concept of sexual identity or ego. Neutering will not change a pet's personality. He doesn't suffer any kind of emotional reaction or identity crisis when neutered.

MYTH: But my dog (or cat) is so special, I want a puppy (or kitten) just like her.

FACT: A dog or cat may be a great pet, but that doesn't mean their offspring will be a carbon copy. Professional animal breeders who follow generations of bloodlines can't guarantee they will get just get what they want out of a particular litter. A pet owner's chances are even slimmer. In fact, an entire litter of puppies or kittens might receive all of a pet's (and her mate's) worst characteristics.

MYTH: Only females need to be fixed.

FACT: But how do those females get pregnant? A male pet can easily father 750 offspring in his lifetime. Just because you don't have to deal with a pregnant dog or cat, it doesn't mean your pet isn't out there creating puppies or kittens!

MYTH: It's too expensive to have my pet spayed or neutered.

FACT: It is not very expensive in Montenegro, and it is cheaper in the long run than caring for the litters! The one-time cost of surgery is much cheaper than a lifetime of care for extra unwanted pets, or the cost of caring for a litter at the dog shelter.

MYTH: I'll find good homes for all the puppies and kittens.

FACT: You wish! You may find homes for all of your pet's litter, but even then, each home you find means one less home for the dogs and cats in shelters who are already waiting for good homes. The problem of pet overpopulation is created and perpetuated one litter at a time.