



Our guide to  
**neutering**



# What is neutering?

Neutering is the name for a veterinary procedure which offers animals a permanent solution for birth control. It may also be known as spaying, castrating, desexing, fixing or sterilizing.



**Neutering is one of the most responsible and kindest actions you can provide for your pet, family and the community. It is one of the hallmarks of responsible pet ownership.**

**Neutering appointments are available at our Community Vet Clinic, Monday to Friday for cats, dogs, rabbits and guinea pigs.**

## **What are the benefits of neutering?**

### **Healthy pets**

Neutering improves your pet's health by reducing or eliminating the risk of certain cancers and other diseases. Your pet is also less likely to develop unwanted behaviours such as the need to escape, roam, spray or fight with other dogs or cats.

### **Happy pets**

Neutering usually reduces urine marking, sexual aggression, mounting and other troublesome behaviours. You also won't have to deal with the inconvenience or mess of a pet in heat or a male reacting to a female being in heat. You'll also be saving the time, money and inconvenience involved in raising a litter of puppies or kittens.

### **Healthy communities**

Neutered pets are less likely to engage in behaviours that could cause problems with neighbours and people in your local area. Another huge benefit of neutering is pet population control. Every year thousands of dogs will become homeless and there are millions of stray cats in the UK. Getting your pet neutered will help to reduce the number of unwanted animals.



## When should I get my pet neutered?

As soon as your pet is old enough you can get it neutered.

Pet pregnancy accidents happen all the time. Even with the best fencing, kennel, and training it is not a guarantee that your dog won't escape or that a female in heat won't break in to meet up with your pet. Cats are difficult to keep indoors. They will escape the home and roam distances to find a mate.

Mayhew's recommended ages for neutering are from nine weeks of age for male and female cats and from twelve weeks of age for male and female dogs.

## What is the procedure?

### Females (spaying)

In female animals, spaying involves surgery to remove the ovaries and uterus. Spaying is performed commonly on household pets such as cats, dogs and rabbits.

### Males (castration)

In male animals, castration involves the removal of the testicles and is commonly practiced on household pets.

Both female and male pets will be sedated and anaesthetised for their operations, so they won't feel any pain or be aware of what is happening. The operation is relatively straight forward and most animals will be in and out of the veterinary clinic within one day.



## How soon will my pet recover after neutering?

Most pets will recover quickly after their neutering surgery. They will be up and alert shortly after surgery and back to their usual self the next day.

You may need to restrict activity in pets who are very active and control your pet excessively licking the surgical site for ten days afterwards.

## Myths and facts of neutering

**Myth:** My pet will become fat and lazy.

**Fact:** Females may have a tendency to put on weight after being neutered, however this can be easily managed by reducing their food intake and having a good exercise routine.

**Myth:** It is better to let my pet either mate or 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. Reproduction is a biological

event in cats and dogs – they do not yearn for a family in the way humans do.

**Myth:** My pet is too young now I'll leave it until he/she is a bit older.

**Fact:** Male and female cats can be neutered from nine weeks of age. Male and female dogs can be neutered from twelve weeks of age.

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

**Fact:** You may find homes for your pet's puppies and kittens. But you can only control what decisions you make with your own pet, not the decisions other people make with theirs. Your pet's puppies and kittens, or their puppies or kittens, could end up being neglected, living on the streets, being runover, injured or put to sleep.

Mayhew never puts a healthy animal to sleep but not all rescue centres have this ethos.



**Myth:** But my dog or cat is so special, I want a puppy or kitten just like her.

**Fact:** Your pet's puppies or kittens are highly unlikely to be a carbon copy of your pet. Even professional breeders cannot make this guarantee. Please consider adopting as there are so many unwanted animals in shelters waiting for homes that are just as cute, smart, sweet and loving as your pet.

**Myth:** Neutering may affect my dog's emotional identity.

**Fact:** Pets don't have any concept of sexual identity or ego. Neutering will not change a pet's personality. They don't suffer any kind of emotional reaction or identity crisis when neutered.

**Myth:** I want my dog to be protective in the home.

**Fact:** It is a dog's natural instinct to protect home and family. A dog's personality is formed more by genetics and environment than by sex hormones.

**Myth:** I can't afford to have my pet spayed or neutered.

**Fact:** Mayhew and other rescue centres and organisations in the UK run low-cost neutering programmes. Mayhew also offers free neutering for cats eligible under the London C4 scheme. Check your area for low-cost neutering centres. Alternatively, you can adopt an animal from a rescue centre, as the pets should all be neutered prior to adoption.

If you would like to get your pet neutered at Mayhew's on-site veterinary clinic please call us on 020 8962 8017 or email [vetclinic@mayhewanimalhome.org](mailto:vetclinic@mayhewanimalhome.org) to make an appointment.



**Mayhew is an animal welfare charity based in London.**

**We rescue and rehome unwanted, abandoned and neglected animals.**

**We work in the community across London, offering a wide range of animal welfare services providing advice, care and assistance to animals and pet owners whatever the circumstances.**

**Your support to help our work is greatly appreciated.**

**Thank you.**

[www.themayhew.org](http://www.themayhew.org)

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