



28966 Information Lane
Easton, Maryland 21601
(410) 822-8505 (410) 758-3404

NEUTERING

What is neutering?

Neutering is a surgical procedure that removes the ovaries and uterus (ovariohysterectomy) or the ovaries (ovariectomy) in the female (commonly known as spaying), and the testicles (castration) in the male. This permanent surgery sterilizes your pet so it cannot reproduce.

Why neuter my pet?

Sterilization of the female eliminates unwanted pregnancy, as well as eliminating heat cycles that occur on average every 6 months. It reduces the risk of mammary cancer that is linked to heat cycles, and it reduces the risk of pyometra (infected uterus).

In the male, it reduces unwanted male behavior, such as urine marking and aggression, as well as roaming. It eliminates the risk of testicular tumors, and also reduces the risk of prostatic infections. It does NOT reduce the risk of prostatic cancer.

When to neuter my pet?

There is no definitive “best” time to neuter your dog. Shelter animals are usually neutered before they are adopted, sometimes as early as 8 weeks of age. However, there is new evidence to support waiting much longer than that. Recent studies in Golden Retrievers, Vizslas, and Rottweilers have shown that early neutering of both males and females MAY increase the incidence of certain cancers and orthopedic problems in these breeds. It is unknown how this applies to smaller breeds. However, multiple heat cycles may increase the incidence of mammary cancer and pyometra in female dogs. Unneutered males also have a higher rate of prostatic infections and testicular cancer. Taking all these factors into account, it is now suggested that neutering at 2-3 years of age may be the best compromise. Of course, if you do not have a safe place to keep your female when she is in heat, the risk of accidental pregnancy and pet overpopulation far outweighs the risk of later cancers. If you have concerns about your pet, please discuss it with us!

In cats, there is no clear evidence at this time that early neutering is detrimental in any way. We still recommend surgical sterilization at 6 -7 months for both male and female cats.

Will my pet get fat?

Surgical sterilization does not cause your pet to get fat. Diet, exercise, and heredity have much more influence on the weight of your pet. However, because your neutered pet does not have the caloric needs of an unneutered pet, they should be fed less in order to maintain the same weight.

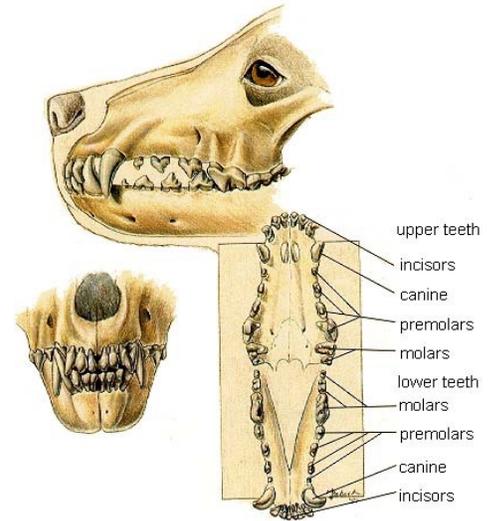


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Dental Care

Oral hygiene is just as important for our pets as it is for the other members of your family. It is easier to start dental care when your pet is young, but any dog can be trained to have the teeth brushed daily. A puppy has 28 deciduous (temporary) teeth; adult teeth start to erupt at 4 months of age, and all 42 teeth should appear at 6 to 7 months of age. Some puppies may still retain their baby teeth at 6 months of age, which leaves no space for the permanent teeth to erupt. If this occurs, these retained deciduous teeth will need to be extracted.

Plaque and tartar accumulate on your pet's teeth at an early age. This plaque and tartar can lead to gingivitis (infections of the gum). If left untreated, the supporting structures of the tooth will be compromised, leading to tooth decay, pain, and possible bone infection (periodontal disease). Approximately 85% of dogs over three years of age have some degree of periodontal disease. Poor dental health can lead to loss of teeth or accumulation of harmful bacteria, which may cause heart, kidney, and liver disease. The key to prevent dental disease is to start dental care early!



Brushing Your Pet's Teeth



Your dog's teeth should be brushed once daily. With a puppy, pick a time of day when they are tired. Begin by letting your pet take the toothpaste - give a special reward when they try it! Slowly progress to touching their teeth (use your finger or fingerbrush), continue to reward and make it fun. Once you can touch all the teeth easily, advance to using a soft toothbrush; again continue the reward. Wipe all teeth at the gum line from front and back, with strokes from the gum line to the tip of the tooth. Any fluoride-free toothpaste will work.

Brushing your pet's teeth and regular veterinary dental exams are the best ways of preventing tartar accumulation and periodontal disease. Dental chew toys can be of benefit, as can water additives (Healthy Mouth). For more information on veterinary accepted chew toys and oral health, refer to the website www.VOHC.org.

We recommend that we examine your pet's teeth once a year. Remember, a healthy mouth is essential for the well-being of your pet.



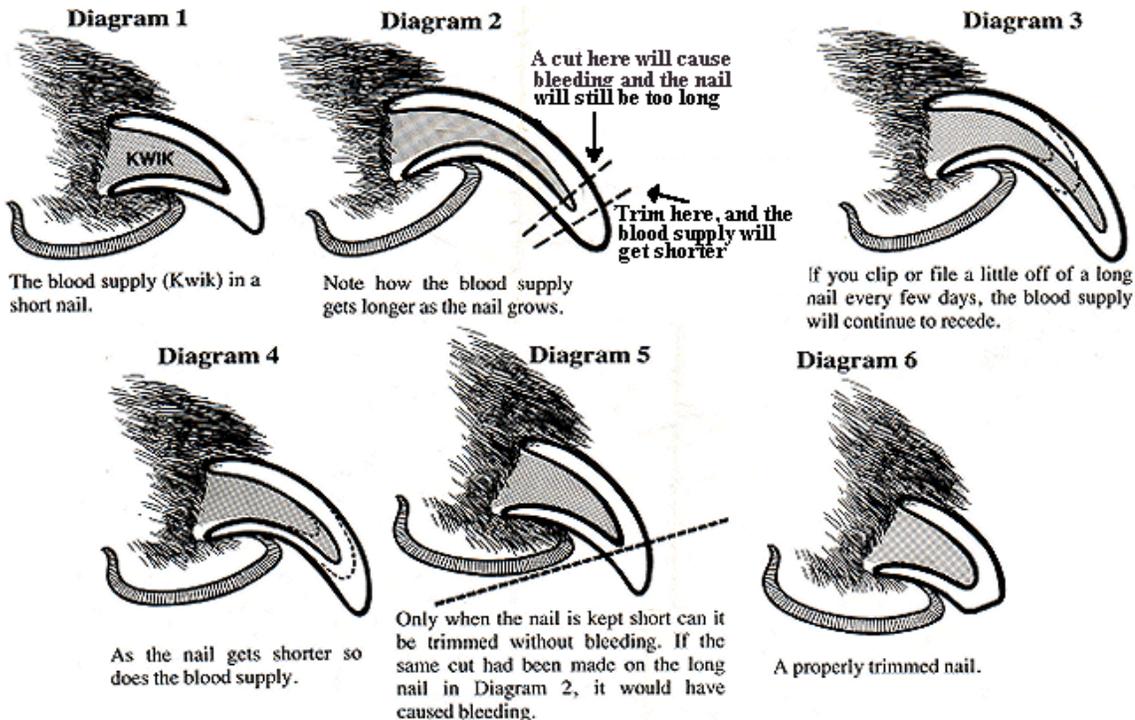
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Nail Care for Dogs and Cats

The nail is a direct extension of the skin. Like the skin, it has a rich blood supply and may bleed if the nail is trimmed too short. Nails are important for proper movement or locomotion as well as grasping. Cats also use their nails to fight and climb trees.

In one month, nails will grow an average of 2/10 of an inch (or about one inch every 5 months). The nails should be kept properly trimmed for good foot health and normal movement. Abnormal nails may predispose the feet to trauma, strains, and infections.

You may bring your pet in to the hospital for a nail trim and/or we can also give you a demonstration if you would like to trim the nails at home. A good rule to follow is once your pet's nails grow to the point that they touch the floor (hard floors such as wood, vinyl, or concrete), it is time for a nail trim.



NOTE: If you inadvertently cut a nail too short at home, don't panic. Try pressing a bar of soap or wax at the tip of the nail or use a styptic pencil. If this doesn't work, put a non-stick pad or clean gauze over the nail, bandage the foot, and give us a call.



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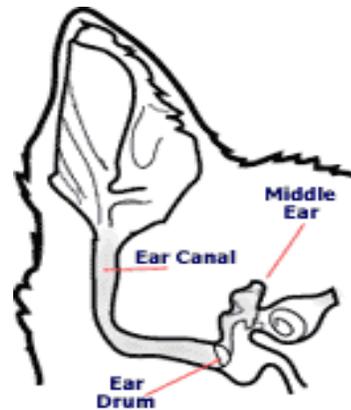
Ear Care and Cleaning

The ear is a very sensitive organ and must be handled with care. All animals require that the ear and ear canal be kept free of dirt, debris, hair, and parasites such as fleas and mites. Pet owners should gently handle their pet's ears on a weekly basis looking for pain, odor, or discharge. It is very important to start this routine when you first bring your pet home, be it a kitten, puppy, or adult dog or cat.

If you notice any pain, redness, odor, or discharge when handling your pet's ears, please seek your veterinarian's advice as soon as possible. Any inflammation or infection of the ear is not only very uncomfortable and painful for your pet, but it can also cause serious damage if left untreated. The longer this condition remains untreated, the higher the chances that permanent changes will occur.

There are numerous causes of ear infections in dogs and cats. These include:

- Parasites (fleas, mites, and flies)
- Foreign material such as grass and dirt
- Hair and hair mats blocking air circulation to the ear
- Excess production of wax
- Allergies
- Diseases from other parts of the body
- Cleaning ears with water and/or home remedies



The conformation of the ear is also important. Dogs with long, pendulous ears may be more prone to ear infections, as well as dogs that spend time in the water. Other pets can have infections related to inhalant or food allergy. Routine cleaning and drying with a solution made specifically for ears may be recommended for your pet- ask your doctor. We will be glad to show you how to clean the ears, as well as come up with a routine cleaning schedule made specifically for your pet. **Always seek your veterinarian's advice before placing any product, including water, in your pet's ears.**