

THE IMPORTANCE OF STERILISATION:

By Louise Thompson

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Not enough male dogs are sterilised today! There seems to be a big “hang up” about this simple medical procedure, myths and “old wives” stories abound, and usually given as reasons by owners, as why they don’t want to have their dogs “fixed”.

I am also not ashamed to admit that I am actively trying to discourage people from adding to the unwanted dog over population! This simple procedure is performed under general anaesthetic by your veterinarian, on average, when your male pup is about six months of age.

In dogs, it has been scientifically proved that there is a direct link between the production of testosterone and dominant aggressive behaviour, both inter-canine (dog to dog) and human-canine (dog to human). The male dog’s level of testosterone “peaks” at about 30 months.

Did you know that the profile of a typical dog who has attacked, and either mauled or killed a child is: - **“A male dog between the ages of 24 and 30 months, which has not been castrated of various working and fighting breeds.”** What is even more disturbing is that a good many of these attacks are by the family pet dog! In their own home! Most of these incidents could have been avoided and even prevented!

The following profile is of pet dogs would be more likely to attack, are: -

- Dogs that have had no learning or education. A dog's education should begin at a reputable puppy learning and socialising group from about seven weeks of age and all learning should be reward based/positive reinforcement methods of learning. Abuse and punishment have no place in animal learning. Education for a young pup and dog is vital to increase his levels of tolerance to all things, and people, as well as him learning basic manners and obedience to develop into a socially acceptable companion animal.
- Owners who keep dogs living behind solid walls with no appropriate stimulation, (visual, mental or physical). Yard dogs, kept as mobile security systems or defence mechanism, kept in solitary confinement!
- Abused dogs.
- Dogs that are kept chained up for long periods of time.
- Dogs that have been extensively physically punished, and develop “defensive” fear aggression mechanisms.
- Dogs who have been teased and tormented by children and develop a negative association with children.
- Untrained/partly untrained dogs that are taught “aggression” by ignorant trainers, and are triggered by an inappropriate situation. This would be considered as a “misread signal” by the dog.
- Overtly indulged dogs that are given all the privileges of leadership in the human canine pack. These “spoiled brat” dogs often take it upon themselves to make a misguided critical decision in the home. No dog can cope with the responsibility of being the leader in the human – dog pack or group. Humans should be clear decision-makers and the dog should earn all privileges.
- Dogs that are over protective, either of their environment (territory) or their owners.
- Injured or sick dogs – defensive aggression or fear/pain biters.

All these kinds of dogs are all potential “attack” dogs.

Unless the dog is a show animal, registered and a tip top breed champion dog with registered with the Kennel Union of Southern Africa or Federation papers, and is winning at breed and/or obedience dog shows: - **NEUTER HIM!**

Even a pure bred dog, (without Kennel Union registration papers) is worthless. A pure bred registered dog that has not proved himself in the ring (either breed or obedience) is also worth dramatically less than a winner! **NEUTER HIM!**

One male dog can father hundreds of unwanted mongrel “randomly bred” puppies a year – of which a great number **will be humanely killed by welfare** agencies, as there are just too many dogs to place in homes! Many of these unwanted pups end up being abused and used for many horrendous purposes, from dog fighting bait (for big money) to animal experimentation or just unloved and unwanted then dumped! **NEUTER HIM!**

Neutering your Male Dog is the Ethical Thing to Do!

In South Africa welfare societies **humanely kill thousands of dogs** each year, due to careless breeding. You do not need to add to the statistics!

ADVANTAGES OF NEUTERING A MALE DOG

- Neutered dogs live longer – risks of prostate cancer are eliminated.
- Neutering lowers dominant aggressive behaviour towards owners by 65%.
- Neutering lowers inter-dog aggressive behaviour by some 65%
- There is a reduction of straying and wandering by some 80%
- There is a reduction of inappropriate urination/marking behaviour by 70%
- Neutering also lowers the male dog’s urge to mount, and simulate inappropriate copulation movements by some 70%
- Neutering focus’s attention and concentration.

IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THE ADVANTAGES OF NEUTERING GREATLY OUTWEIGH THE DISADVANTAGES.

DISPELLING THE NEUTERING MYTHS:

- Neutered dogs put on weight!
So will you if you eat too much and don’t exercise enough!
- Neutered dogs make poor watchdogs!
How can that be? As neutering focuses attention and improves concentration. Therefore in reality, a neutered male dog is less easily distracted by things that a robber would be likely to use as a distraction (like a bitch in season).
- Neutering my dog will make him a wimp.
Only if he was already a wimp to start with!
Neutering does not change, and can not change your dog’s basic character!

It seems to me that the decision to keep a dog entire must of course depend on many factors, **BUT :-**

- Unless the dog is a show animal, registered and a tip top breed dog with papers, and is winning at breed and/or obedience dog shows: **-Neuter him**

SPCA destroys many thousands of dogs each year due to careless breeding. You do not need to add to the statistics!

- If your dog is of a fighting breed and you are expecting a baby in the near future - **Neuter him**
- If you have any hint of aggressive or dominant behaviour – **Neuter him**

- If you have more than one male dog of different ages and want to avoid future aggression/fighting when the lower dog reaches maturity. **Neuter the lower ranking (victim) dog** at an early age to avoid status aggression.

As an after thought - in closing I might add, that unlike their human counterparts, the only time that a male dog thinks of sex, is when there is a bitch in season within range without a headache! The rest of the time, the male dog is more interested in his supper!

SPAYING YOUR BITCH PUPPY

*By Louise Thompson
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As with neutering a male dog, there are also many advantages to spaying a bitch.

- The procedure is done under general anaesthetic by your veterinarian from about six months of age.
- Spayed bitches and neutered dogs make the best family pets.
- Unless you have a really good registered breed specimen, and are prepared to go to the length of attending and winning breed shows which takes tons of time energy, preparation and training it is definitely worth having your bitch puppy spayed:

Advantages of spaying a bitch

- The bitch will not come into season and not be able to conceive puppies.
- You will not have to worry about hormonal changes before, during and after a season. Hormonal changes in bitches often alter normal/usual behaviour. (A kind of doggie P.M.S!)
- You will save on kennel fees, for if a bitch is in season she should be kennelled to avoid any mating accidents.
- You will not have to worry about the mess and time it takes to clean up after a bitch is in season. Discharge, bleeding etc.
- The bitch not being able to have a season makes your life a whole lot easier, you will not have the whole neighbourhood dogs camping on your doorstep, trying to mate her.
- Sterilised bitches **live longer** and have fewer health risks
- If your bitch is sterilised you will not have to worry about one of the neighbourhood dogs mating your bitch and creating more unwanted puppies in a world that is already over-populated with randomly bred strays, thus saving dogs lives!

Unless you have a really good registered breed specimen, and are prepared to go to the length of attending and winning breed shows, (which takes total dedication, tons of time energy, preparation and training) spay your bitch puppy. IT IS THE ETHICAL THING TO DO!

WHY NOT LET HER HAVE A LITTER FOR THE CHILDREN TO HAVE THE EXPERIENCE?

In a world of canine over population, to use the excuse that you want your own children to see the “miracle of birth” **forget it – YOU HAVE LOST THE PLOT!**

Thousands of dogs and puppies are killed each year at various welfare organisations due to there being **more supply than demand.**

Don't kid yourself that they are all street mongrels – they are not.

Take a drive to your local animal welfare centre – look into the eyes of the dogs in kennels on death row and then perhaps you might re-think your ideas and values.

Rather leave the breeding of dogs to the professionals who breed genetically sound animals and who **breed expressly for the betterment of the breed.** If you want the kids to experience the “miracle of birth” then rather buy them a good book or a video

Do you have any idea of the time money and effort it can take to bring a “Good” litter of puppies to the age where they can be homed???

- **CONSIDER:** The cost of a suitable stud (male) dog to cover the bitch (can be thousands of rands!)
- **CONSIDER: Feed costs – pregnant and lactating bitches need to be on a special diet:** Special feed is very expensive!
- **CONSIDER:** Construction and expense of a suitable whelping area and the time involved in supervising and being on call waiting to deliver pups
- **CONSIDER:** Birth costs – whelping can go horribly wrong and the bitch could need medical intervention – this really costs! She could need a caesarean section and intensive care for so
- **CONSIDER:**
The bitch could **die** during the birth, which could leave you with lots of hungry little mouths to bottle feed, clean and stimulate toilet functions **every two hours for the next six weeks or so!** It should be noted that some (larger) breeds can produce up to sixteen pups in one litter!!!
- **CONSIDER:** Behaviourally orphan pups never develop normally, due to a lack of canine maternal imprinting and non-interaction with siblings etc. These orphaned pups often end up with severe behavioural problems later on.
- **CONSIDER:** The pups could be sickly and need costly medication and veterinary fees
- **CONSIDER:** The cost of the inoculation of the litter of puppies – expensive!
- **CONSIDER** The cost of regular de-worming of the litter of puppies – expensive!
- **CONSIDER:** The cost of special feed for puppies – expensive!
- **CONSIDER:** If the pups are “purebred” they will need to be registered with the registration authority such as the Kennel Union of SA or the various Federations of certain breeds. A fee is applicable for each pup that is registered.
- Certain breeds also required tattooing before being homed – also expensive! Litters born to bitches under the age of 24 months are **NOT** eligible for registration.
- **CONSIDER:** Time energy and effort involved in feeding, cleaning and training puppies. Puppies cry a lot, eat and drink a lot and they pee and pooh a lot – tons of time, effort, energy and money involved cleaning up after them – expensive!

MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL!

- **CONSIDER:** For medium and large breeds, at the end of the seventh week is the best time to place the puppies in their new homes. **THAT IS IF THERE ARE ANY HOMES AVAILABLE!**
- Who would you be able to find **whom you can trust** to take on one of these puppies, bearing in mind that **taking on a puppy is a twelve to fifteen year commitment?**
- **WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WHEN YOU REALISE:-**
That you are not going to be able to get rid of all the puppies and that you might be saddled with the lot! And now the puppies are suddenly not so cute any more, and are fast becoming a nuisance, destructive and messy and costing you a lot of money, time, effort and energy.

ARE YOU GOING TO KEEP THE ENTIRE LITTER???

- Bear in mind some breeds can produce up to A DOZEN or more puppies! Or are you just going to dump them at the local SPCA when you realise that you are unable to get rid of them?
- **Sterilise your bitch puppy it is the ethical thing to do!**

- Breeding should be left to the ethical reputable professionals who breed solely for the improvement and betterment of the breed In fact my personal belief is that **people should have to be licensed**, in order to be permitted **the privilege** of breeding a litter of puppies.
- A breeder should have to prove himself “Worthy” before being allowed to add to the canine population.

The breeder should be considered the “Genetic Factory” of the end product – which should be a socially acceptable dog! In many ways this is an awesome responsibility that I wish more breeders would consider.