

# Elburn Animal Hospital Newsletter

March, 2010

## Welcome

Last year we discussed how spaying and neutering helps your pet. This year we're concentrating on why spaying and neutering helps us as pet owners, and the country overall. First, an overview of how altering a pet helps it stay healthy. Any questions can be addressed to a member of our staff, or you can contact us via email at [3lburn@sbcglobal.net](mailto:3lburn@sbcglobal.net).

## March: Spay and Neuter for Your Pet

Spaying or neutering your pet can help it live a longer, happier life. Read further for information on why this is so.

- Estrus is an emotional time for the female dog. Dogs in heat bleed from the vulva, and this can last for several weeks. There are diapers available, but you must also be aware of the risk of vaginitis, an infection of the vulva and vagina that often results from this area being moist and not-so-clean. Female cats cycle in and out of estrus about every week if they are not impregnated. They will cry and carry on until this occurs, and they tend to exhibit less predictable behavior.

- Estrus is not stressful for females alone. A male can smell a female in heat for several miles—if he is intact this becomes extremely distracting and leads to more roaming. This behavior leads to a



higher incidence of injury and violent death related to fighting and car accidents. It is estimated that intact male cats kept outdoors live an average of two years due to these associated risks.

- Female cats and dogs have a greatly increased risk of pyometra, an infection in the uterus that can become fatal. The cure for pyometra is spaying, but the procedure becomes much more dangerous for your pet and more costly for you when it must be done as an emergency procedure.

- Altering your pet reduces its risk of certain types of cancer. It completely eliminates the risk of testicular, ovarian and uterine cancer. It reduces the risk of prostate enlargement and cancer in males. Spaying and neutering also reduces the risk of mammary gland tumors in both sexes—by up to 80% in female dogs spayed before they enter their first estrus cycle, and up to 90% in



female cats spayed before 6 months' of age. Since 50% of mammary gland tumors in dogs and 96% in cats are found to be malignant, there is a

definite benefit.

- An altered pet is less likely to come in contact with many other diseases due to the reduced desire to find a mate. Diseases such as parvovirus, distemper, hepatitis and others are often fatal to companion animals.

## March: Spay and Neuter for Your Family

Above, we addressed some reasons to spay and neuter pets from the pet's perspective. But there are plenty of reasons why this is an important procedure from a human's perspective. Below are several of these reasons.

- Spayed and neutered pets experience fewer behavior problems, including urine marking in the house, roaming, fighting, and aggressive behavior. This is the case for both male and female dogs and cats.

- Male dogs left intact past the age of three are more likely to experience bouts of aggression towards humans. Not all dogs left intact will exhibit this tendency, but the risk is increased and pet owners should be aware of it.



- Pets that have been altered statistically live longer than those that are not. In dogs, the lifespan increases by one to three years. In cats the

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lifespan is three to five years longer, on average. The reduced desire to roam also reduces the chances of a pet being hit by a car or coming in contact with diseases.

- Excess puppies and kittens put an extra strain on the economy and the environment. Taxpayers must pay for the services of their animal control facilities that house unwanted and feral companion animals. The more that are adopted into homes, the less the taxpayer pays in the long run. Over one billion dollars is paid each year to sustain these programs—if the overpopulation of companion animals were lowered by *every owner* spaying and neutering their pets, the cost would go down significantly.



- The risk of catching a disease from a pet is much higher in families that keep unaltered animals. Because intact animals roam and engage in fighting (and mating) behaviors more than spayed or neutered ones do, they come in contact with diseases such as rabies, lymes disease, and leptospirosis, all of



which can be fatal to both animals and humans. Unaltered pets also come in contact with more parasites such as fleas, ticks and intestinal parasites (worms), which can spread disease to humans as well.

- The risk of disease does not affect only individuals—it is a risk that whole communities share. When there are too many companion animals running loose and not enough population control, the diseases that affect the animals may become a serious health threat to everyone in the area. Many contagious diseases and parasites are spread through contact with fecal matter. The average dog produces about ½ pound of fecal matter per day. In Kane County there were approximately 40,000 dogs licensed in 2009, and 45,000 in 2008. This means that our county experiences at least 3300 *tons* of canine fecal matter each year! Cats can transmit parasites and disease through fecal material as well, and

although there are fewer licensed cats (15000 per year, approximately) there are many more feral cats than feral dogs running loose. Altering your pet lowers its risk of contracting a disease and spreading it not only to your family, but to other pets and other families as well.

Obviously there are many reasons to spay and neuter our pets. When you spay or neuter your pet you are not only caring for your pet but you are being responsible towards families, our community, and the environment as a whole. Almost all animal shelter facilities require that adopted pets be altered before going to their forever homes. One such facility is TAILS, located in DeKalb. At their facility puppies and kittens are neutered at an early age so they can go to their Forever Homes as quickly as possible. Following are some of the animals currently housed at the TAILS' facility.



- Hooligan: I'm one of the many little black kittens at TAILS hoping for a Forever Home. I'm just a little guy and 5-months old.

- Bump: I'm another black kitten at TAILS and am 7-months old. I'm a medium sized girl who was found as a stray. I'd like to learn what this Forever Home thing is that everyone here talks about. Will you show me?



- Fluffy: My owner became very ill and could no longer care for me. I'm a wonderful girl with the most beautiful white fur. I'm a

Turkish Angora mix. I love other cats and to explore my home. Can your home become mine? I'm a loving girl.

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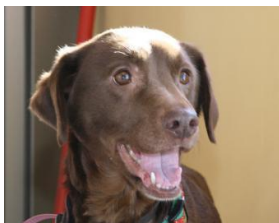
- Tia: My green eyes will enchant you. I'm a 2-year old girl who is a Persian mix. I was found as a stray and brought to TAILS. I would sure love a home with you.



will be a gentle good friend to someone. Won't you give me a chance?

**March Special:** During the month of March, mention this ad to receive half off a 24PetWatch microchip, including registration. A \$21 value.

- Lexi: I LOVE you and we haven't even met! I'm a



Chocolate Lab mix who is 6-years old. Don't let my age fool you--I'm still a youngster. I'd rather play with people than with toys. I'm a

medium-sized dog with a super-big heart to love you!

- Shawnee: I'm smart even though I'm just 4-months old. I'm a Lab mix who loves to play with people and toys. Good thing I'll be a medium-sized dog because I love to sit on laps for cuddles.

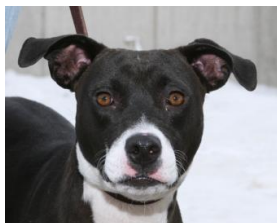


- Poe: I'm a black puppy but mom was a brown beagle. My sis, Virginia, and I are at TAILS



waiting for our Forever Homes. Our four siblings were adopted and we hope that we're next. We were rescued from a high-kill shelter, whatever that means.

- Faith: I'm a 2-year old girl who can't get enough of chasing a ball. It bounces and I run. I just can't help it. If my person's arm gets tired, I'll toss the ball and you know what? It bounces and I still chase it. Some people stay away from me because I'm a Pit Bull Terrier mix who was rescued from a high-kill shelter. People don't look at me much but I'm the friendliest girl and love people so much. I really



**Upcoming Events:** Sign up soon for our **charity dog wash**. We will be offering discounted bathing, nail trims, ear cleaning, and anal gland expression. The date is set for Saturday, June 12<sup>th</sup>, so reserve your space now.

Also mark the calendar for this year's annual **Open House!** Yes, we are hosting another open house at our office on Saturday, September 25<sup>th</sup>. We are featuring games, treats and area rescue groups.

If you have an idea for a newsletter topic, or a question you would like answered, send it to us! We're interested in what you want to know about! Email us at [3lburn@sbcglobal.net](mailto:3lburn@sbcglobal.net).

Thanks for your patronage. If you have any questions or would like more information check out our website at [www.elburnanimalhospital.com](http://www.elburnanimalhospital.com), or give us a call at (630) 365-9599. If you would like to opt out of receiving the Elburn Animal Hospital newsletter, please contact us at [3lburn@sbcglobal.net](mailto:3lburn@sbcglobal.net).