

## **Benefits of Spaying/Neutering Your Pet**

At Coal Creek Veterinary Hospital we believe prevention is the key to good health. For this reason your doctor has recommended spaying/neutering your pet. An ovariohysterectomy (spay) is the surgical removal of the uterus and ovaries from the abdomen of a female animal. Castration is the surgical removal of the testicles from the scrotum of a male animal. These surgical procedures provide many benefits for the health of your animal.

Benefits include:

### **1) Prevention of unwanted puppies/kittens**

- Every year 6-8 million cats and dogs enter shelters. Of that number 3-4 million are euthanized. According to Denver Dumb Friends League in 2007 27,725 animals were relinquished. Almost 10,000 of those animals were not re-homed and had to be euthanized. By spaying/neutering your pet you are guaranteeing a foolproof method of birth control. You are also guaranteeing that your pet's offspring will not be another statistic at a shelter.

### **2) Potentially fatal illnesses**

- In dogs, mammary cancer is 50% malignant and in cats the risk jumps to 80% malignancy. The number of heat cycles a female goes through before being spayed has a direct effect on her risk for cancer. By getting your pet spayed within 4 heat cycles you can significantly reduce her risks. For this reason we recommend surgery before the first heat cycle.
- Females also face the potential for a fatal uterine infection known as a pyometra. If left untreated the uterus can rupture and lead to death.
- In males, the chance of prostate gland disease and testicular tumors are high. BPH (Benign Prostatic Hypertrophy) is a condition that affects 80% of intact males 6 years and older. If left untreated BPH can progress to cancer. Fortunately if done soon enough the disease can be reversed if neutering occurs.

### **3) Undesirable behaviors**

- In female dogs spaying will eliminate spotting of blood, which happens twice annually during heat cycles and seasonally in cats. You may also experience increased vocalization, extreme affection or aggression, and the desire to roam/escape during a heat cycle.
- In neutered males behaviors such as urine marking and spraying are decreased. You will also notice a decrease in aggression and the desire to roam.
- In male cats there is also the reduction of the strong urine odor that is given off.

The simple fact is that spaying/neutering greatly increases the lifespan of your pet and the quality of life as well. Please speak with a health care team member if you have any questions regarding these procedures and to help you make the best decisions for your pet's health.