

Effect on Body Weight

for good homes for the litter before it arrives. Even if you do successfully place the offspring, they will take the place of pets awaiting adoption at pet shelters that are deprived of a chance to be rescued.

There is no benefit from sexual activity for male or female dogs or cats. Do not project your own physical or emotional needs onto your pet. It is not "unnatural" to control a pet's reproductive activity by having it neutered. Rather, it is unkind not to neuter a pet.

Effect on Escape and Roaming

A neutered pet is less likely to roam. Castrated male dogs and cats tend to patrol smaller outdoor areas and are less likely to engage in territorial conflicts with rivals. Spayed female cats may actually expand the territory patrolled. A pet that has already had successful escapes will probably continue to run away after it is neutered.

Effect on Inappropriate Elimination

Dogs and cats may urinate or defecate in undesirable areas of your home to stake territorial claims, relieve anxiety, and advertise reproductive status. This may continue long after the initial cause has passed.

Because this behavior is only partly under hormonal control, male or female pets may begin to eliminate inappropriately even after neutering. Neutering an animal that has begun to inappropriately eliminate reduces the urine odor of intact adults and eliminates the contribution of hormonal factors. Unless underlying emotional or physical factors are controlled and environmental reminders are removed, the undesirable behavior may persist beyond neutering.

**It is unkind not to
neuter a pet**

Because of metabolic changes that follow neutering, some pets may gain weight. Some pets gain weight after neutering because they are fed more by owners who feel guilty for subjecting their pet to any discomfort and compensate with extra food treats.

Pets, like people, become less active as they mature and may gain weight. Activity declines as a young pet matures, regardless of whether or not it is neutered. Before the surgery, and particularly for sexually mature individuals, energy is channelled toward reproduction. Females in heat are often agitated and irritable, sleeping and eating less. Males may be more reactive to stimuli in general and more acutely aware of rivals or intruders on their territory. Neutering reduces the intensity of many behavior problems and eliminates or prevents certain types of undesirable behavior.

After your pet is neutered, adjust its food intake to prevent excessive weight gain. Weight gain following neutering is easily controlled. If food intake is not decreased after neutering, a gradual weight increase is likely. Suggested quantities on pet food packages are meant as general guidelines.

Adjust your pet's food intake according to its physical requirements and appearance. Weight loss requires careful monitoring by your veterinarian, particularly in obese pets. Special weight-reducing diets are available, but rapid weight loss is almost never advisable.

Weight gain is sometimes associated with certain medical disorders. If you believe your pet's weight gain is out of proportion to its food intake and exercise level, consult your veterinarian.

Related Topic

Escaping and Roaming