

# Why should I think about getting my pet dog de-sexed (Neutered / spayed) ?



A large number of pet owners leave their pets entire rather than getting them de-sexed. This may be for a variety of reasons, the owners just didn't think it was a necessary expense, they felt it was better for their dog because its temperament would change, or perhaps they wanted the option of breeding from their pet at some stage. Many though have not ever been given information on the con's of making a conscious decision to leave your dog entire.

This info sheet is designed to give you some facts about de-sexing dogs, along with information on some key issues to consider before choosing to breed from your pet so that your decision to continue to leave your dog entire is an informed one.

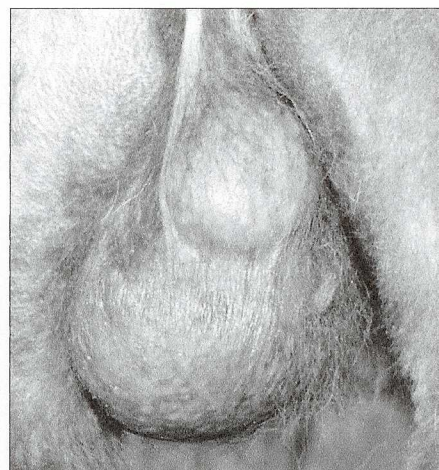
Unless you are planning to breed from an animal there is no reason for a dog or cat to be left entire and there are many reasons why de-sexing is best for both animals and their owners. Despite popular belief a bitch does not have any need to have a litter of pups for its wellbeing, physical or psychological. Neither do males need to remain intact to maintain their 'manhood'. De-sexing does not alter a dogs temperament in any negative way; the changes that it brings about simply make your dog easier to get along with. De-sexed dogs also often bond better with their owners because they are not so distracted by their drives and hormones.

Most importantly there are significant health reasons why a dog which is not intended for breeding should be de-sexed as there are a number of very serious (life threatening) health conditions which entire dogs are susceptible to and which owners of de-sexed animals do not need to worry about. As a result of our boarding and grooming operations at Asryn Kennels we frequently see dogs (often elderly ones) which have been left entire and which have developed life serious health problems simply because they have not been de-sexed. The picture below was taken of an older Border Collie who came in for grooming and who had developed testicular cancer (note the swelling of one teste). Such cancer is common in entire males, just as mammary cancer and diseases of the uterus are common in entire females.

One of the most important advantages of neutering males is the decreased incidences of many urogenital diseases. Other positive effects are decreased incidences of wanting to display territorial marking behaviours or aggression towards other male dogs (without changing your dogs personality), and decreased tendency to want to roam in search of bitches in season.

For females spaying means that owners don't have to worry about messy heats twice a year and the hormonal changes in temperament which can occur at these times. Owners don't have the problem of howling male 'suitor's' at their windows and fences trying to get to their female. From a health point of view de-sexing a female eliminates the risk of pyometra (a devastating disease of the uterus) and significantly decreases the risk of incidences of mammary cancer in your dog.

In essence a de-sexed dog will be easier for you and for others to live with. A note for those who decide to keep your dog entire, you should examine your dog for mammary or testicular abnormalities once a month to minimise the chances of growths developing. Unfortunately there is no way to visually check females for signs of the beginnings of pyometra.





# But I'd like to breed from my dog?



The first question we always ask people when they say they want to breed from their dog is to ask them why they want to breed dogs?

Some do so simply because it's easy to do so. They think it's a nice thing to do because they have a nice dog or dogs, or they would like a puppy to keep from their much loved pet, or they just think it would be good to breed dogs for others to have. They may never have any idea of the sort of issues that they may face in breeding a litter of pups. Some do so simply as a money making exercise and the welfare of their dogs is of little or at least secondary importance

Breeding, if done ethically and responsibly is never a money making exercise; requiring much research, time, commitment and expense. In fact it can become an all consuming activity; one where the responsibility does not end when puppies leave for their new homes but which should continue for the whole life of every dog you breed. Bitches can and often do have problems giving birth. Should a caesarean be required to bring the pups into the world the basic cost can easily be around the \$700 to \$800 mark, and should it be required in the middle of the night (as often occurs) then the out of hour vet fees often bring the cost closer to the \$1,200 mark. Mothers require a check up after birth to ensure all is well as well as special supplementary food whilst they are suckling babies and the pups themselves need check ups, vaccinations and regular worming. As this is just a quick cursory look at some of the costs you can see how these can easily stack up for owners of breeding bitches even if everything goes smoothly.

An experienced and responsible breeder considers a wide range of issues each time a litter is planned, and then produced. Such issues include making considered and informed decisions on what dog might be best to mate with which bitch considering in detail strengths and weaknesses of each dog themselves. An important thing to note is that cross bred dogs have the same chance of passing on genetic health problems as do pure bred ones and so considerations of health testing and knowledge of genetics is just as relevant.

Ethical breeders understand which specific genetic disorders are prone to specific breeds and health test all breeding stock for such problems. They should also have knowledge of recessive genetic genes (those that might skip a generation) which can be just as important in determining the chance of puppies inheriting health or temperament problems (Most have stock which have generations of health tested dogs behind them in their pedigree brothers, sisters and outcomes of other similar litters from similar breeding lines.) They should only breed from dogs of stable and positive temperaments and understand and undertake temperament testing of any puppies, and implement socialisation processes for such puppies.

Such breeders also consider themselves responsible for any puppies that they bring into the world for the whole life of these dogs. They consider the issue of matching the right type of dog with any prospective owners expectations and lifestyle, they are not afraid to not sell a puppy to someone if they feel it will not be well suited and they will take responsibility for post sale advice and support such as information on care and training advice to their puppy buyers well after a sold puppy leaves with its new owner. Many will offer a health guarantee and will be willing to take back and re-home any dog they breed should it be necessary at any time in the dogs life.

We concede that there are many dog breeders (puppy farmers and back yard breeders) who do not undertake many of the processes above and the notes above outline the ideal of what people should do to produce healthy, well adjusted puppies which are likely to live long happy healthy lives and bring their owners joy instead of potential heartbreak.

If you are wanting to breed with your dog ask yourself if you are willing to commit to the sort of detailed processes above. And if you have any hesitation perhaps consider whether breeding might be better left to someone else.