



Spay / Neuter Fact Sheet

Many people struggle with the decision whether or not to get their dog “fixed”. The term “fixed” refers to surgically altering a male dog (called neutering) or a female dog (called spaying) by removing their reproductive organs – testes in males / uterus and ovaries in females. Hickory Hollow is an advocate for spaying or neutering all **pet** dogs and believes it is highly beneficial for many reasons.

Top 5 reasons to Spay or Neuter your dog:

1. Your dog will live longer!

Spaying your female dog helps prevent pyometra (pus-filled uterus), mammary tumors and breast cancer. Treatment of pyometra requires hospitalization, intravenous fluids and antibiotics and usually results in the female being spayed anyway to remove the source of the infection, but if not caught in time it can be fatal. Mammary tumors require surgery to remove them and breast cancer can be fatal in about 50 percent of all female dogs. Spaying your dog before her first heat cycle offers the best protection from these diseases. Neutering your male dog helps prevent testicular cancer if done before six months of age.

2. Your dog will be better behaved!

Spayed or neutered pets make better companions because they will not go through hormonal periods. They are more affectionate and focus their attention on their human families rather than their instinctual mating habits.

An intact male has many typical behavioral issues that can be avoided if neutered at a young age. Unneutered males mark their territory by dribbling a strong-smelling urine all over everything in and around your house even if potty trained, they have a more aggressive personality and are more likely to bite, and they may embarrass you by humping furniture or someone’s leg. When hormones start flowing, he will have a strong drive to roam and to breed. He will become a total wing-nut, meaning any obedience training he may go completely out the window. His behavior can become totally uncontrollable such as whining and howling, digging his way under the fence and escaping from the house. Once he's free to roam, he risks injury in traffic and fights with other males as well as contributing to the “mutt” overpopulation problem.

3. Your house will be cleaner!

Intact males and females have stronger smelling urine. Any accidents that may happen in your house will be harder to clean up and deodorize. Usually, neutered males won’t mark with urine all over your house.

Your spayed female won't go into heat. Unspayed female dogs generally come into heat every 5 to 6 months and have a bloody discharge for up to two weeks. This can be very messy and good sanitation practices can be hard to keep up with.

4. You’ll have more money in your pocketbook!

“How?” you say? Spaying or neutering is very cost-effective. First, we give you \$200 if you do it in the first 2 years of age. The cost of your pet's spay or neuter surgery is also a lot less than the cost of cleaning your furniture or carpets which have been stained from blood or marked on, or the vet bills from treating cancer or pyometra, or from a hit-by-car accident or treating bite wounds from a fight, not to mention having and caring for a litter of pups in which case you should first do all kinds of genetic screening to ensure your dog is of breeding quality, etc... well, you get the idea!

5. Breeding healthy pure bred Llewelin Setters for buyers is hard!

To breed pure bred Llewelin Setters requires Verified Identifiable Parentage (VIP) genetic testing of the breeding pair. Our contract will require genetic testing be done on breeding pairs for over 175 inheritable health concerns as well. The contract also requires testing for hip dysplasia and juvenile cataracts of the breeding pair. All this is not only expensive, it’s logistically challenging as well. If you are committed to breeding and the breeding pair passes genetic tests then okay, otherwise there will be a hefty fine imposed for breach of contract.

Common Myths:

1. A female dog should be allowed to have at least one heat cycle or litter before she is spayed.

This is absurd, and is medically, factually and ethically incorrect! Spaying your female dog before her first heat cycle helps prevent many health issues. Regardless, consult your vet about the best time to spay or neuter.

2. Spaying or neutering my dog will make them fat and lazy.

Lack of exercise and overfeeding will cause your dog to pack on the extra pounds—not getting them fixed. Your dog will remain fit and trim as long as you continue to provide exercise and monitor food intake.

Other Excuses:

My dog is outstanding and I want to have a pup out of him/her...

If your dog is well-bred, then he/she should be outstanding! That's what we breeders strive for and we would hope that everyone feels that way about the dog they get from us, but does that mean that they are ALL of breeding quality? NO! Just because a dog is "registered" or has papers, or you think they are the greatest dog of all time, that doesn't mean he/she is the best specimen of the breed. Best advice; leave the breeding up to the professionals.

We were thinking about having just one litter...

The amount of time, commitment and monetary investment should deter anyone from even remotely considering having just one litter. Most of the time, people don't really think about everything that is involved with producing a litter and the amount of commitment needed. Here are some questions you should ask yourself before considering breeding.

1. Are you committed to investing in genetic testing before starting a breeding program?
2. Are you willing to forgo any breeding if your dog doesn't pass the genetic tests?
3. How do you plan to find a suitable stud?
4. How do you plan to find good, life-long homes for all the pups?
5. Are you knowledgeable about how to whelp and raise a litter properly?
6. Are you willing to take a puppy back from someone when things don't work out?

Puppies are cute but it can be difficult to find homes for all of them. The local market often times is not large enough to absorb 8 to 10 puppies that usually come in a litter. In most of these cases, folks end up giving their pups away or maybe selling puppies to pet stores who will sell to anyone who has the money; most of them don't care where the pups end up. These may be the ones that wind up in shelters. If one can't sell all the puppies then they generally are not able to make up for the cost of the breeding and veterinary care, and therefore it may not have even been worth it.

We want our kids to experience the miracle of birth...

Your dog doesn't need to have a litter to allow your children to witness the miracle of birth. Letting your pet produce offspring without any real commitment behind it teaches your children irresponsibility. There are countless books and videos available to teach your children about birth in a responsible manner. Anyone who has seen an animal euthanized in a shelter for lack of a home knows the truth behind this dangerous myth. If you want your children to get to see little puppies, find a local breeder that would welcome your kids into their home a few days a week as part of their puppy socialization process.

We hope after reading these fact sheets that you will agree that the best way to take care of your dog and promote a lifetime of health and happiness is to get your dog spayed or neutered at a young age. For further information, please consult your veterinarian.