

# Spaying & Neutering of Rabbits

Rabbits are increasingly becoming more popular as pets. Like in dogs and cats, there are many benefits to spaying or neutering your pet rabbit.

Altered rabbits are generally healthier pets. Spaying females between 6 months and 2 years of age can prevent uterine cancers. Certain breeds of rabbits such as the Tan, French, Silver, Havana and Dutch, have up to an 80% higher incidence of uterine cancer at 4 years of age than they did at 2 years of age. Also, other uterine diseases such as pyometra (pus filled uterus), cervicitis (inflammation of the cervix), and endometriosis (aberrant tissue condition of the uterine membrane, can be prevented. Aggressive behavior can also be minimized by altering both males and females.

Aggression tends to become heightened at sexual maturity. Sexually mature males tend to fight with other males or attack other household pets. Castration before puberty, which occurs between 4 and 8 months, can mitigate this tendency and thus minimize the amount of wounds requiring medical treatment. Other destructive behaviors that can be curbed by spaying or neutering include: chewing, digging, biting, urine spraying, and mounting in males. It may take several months after castration in males for the mounting to subside, but other aggressive behaviors should diminish fairly rapidly.

Finally, spaying and neutering can help control overpopulation and abandonment. Just like in dogs and cats, unwanted pet rabbits are becoming more commonplace in animal shelters and/or are being stranded or released in the wild to fend for themselves.