



## ***The Benefits of De-sexing your Dog***

Desexing your dog is the process of eradicating their ability to reproduce. Females are 'spayed', which is the removal of the uterus and ovaries. Males are 'castrated' or 'neutered', which consists of removing their testicles. Desexing is a surgical procedure that requires general anesthesia and does come with some risks. However these risks are minimal in a healthy dog as it is a routine procedure that veterinarians regularly performs and is well versed in. In the big picture, there are multiple benefits that outweigh the disadvantages of desexing your dog. Here are the key benefits to consider why you should desex your dog.

### **Benefits of spaying your female dog:**

- ❖ It reduces the risk of **pyometra**, which can be seen regularly in unspayed bitches. Pyometra is an infection of the uterus, which can be a life-threatening emergency if left untreated. The puss is filled with bacteria and if this is left to accumulate in the uterus for a long period of time, the bacteria can enter into the blood stream causing septic shock. The uterus is also at risk of exploding, further spreading the bacteria to other areas of the body.
- ❖ Reduces the chance of **mammary cancer**
- ❖ Eliminates the chances of getting **ovarian or uterus cancer** and **cysts** within the ovaries
- ❖ Prevention of **unplanned pregnancies**, which in turn reduces the numbers of unwanted puppies within the community
- ❖ Reduces **pseudo-pregnancies**
- ❖ Reduces the **prolapse of the vagina or uterus**.
- ❖ **Stops the dogs' cycles** and the **bleeding** that is associated with it
- ❖ A bitch in heat attracts many male dogs, spaying reduces the amount of **unwanted visitors**

### **The benefits of castrating/neutering your male dog:**

- ❖ Decreases **behavioral issues** such as territorial and scent marking, roaming behaviour to seek for a mate, inappropriate sexual behaviour and aggression
- ❖ Reduces **testicular cancer**, a common problem in older dogs
- ❖ Reduces the chances of your dog getting **benign prostatic hyperplasia**, an enlarged prostate gland which is highly uncomfortable for the dog
- ❖ Over time benign prostatic hyperplasia also causes the dog to excessively strain when toileting. This can cause **hernias** or **prolapses**

When do you desex your dog? A dog can start reproducing at 5 to 6 months of age, so the common practice in Hong Kong is to desex before then. However, make sure you consult with your family veterinarian as to when would be the most suitable time to desex *your* dog, as in some cases the timing suggested could be different. For example, giant breeds (such as Great Danes), are slow growers and don't fully develop until a much later age, therefore it's recommended to postpone desexing until around 12 months of age. TAILS fully supports and encourages the desexing of dogs, for a greater chance at a higher quality of life for the animal as well as minimizing the number of unwanted animals here in Hong Kong.

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