

## Surgical Sterilization of Companion Animals

### **Position:**

The Edmonton Humane Society supports the surgical sterilization (gonadectomy) of companion animals to prevent pet overpopulation and related issues.

### Rationale

- The sterilization of companion animals prevents overpopulation issues, such as unplanned litters, euthanasia, abandonment, and relinquishment of unwanted companion animals. Sterilization helps to address the root cause of pet overpopulation by spaying and neutering dogs, cats, and rabbits by licensed veterinarians.
- Sterilization is associated with health benefits for companion animals. For example, spaying eliminates the risk of uterine infections (pyometra) and cancer, and neutering eliminates the risk of testicular cancer. Sterilization also helps to reduce some undesirable behaviours, such as territorial or reproductive behaviours.
- The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) strongly supports neutering of all cats and dogs at animal shelters prior to adoption to prevent ongoing contributions to pet overpopulation issues.
- EHS implements several strategies to address companion animal overpopulation:
  - Offering a Prevent Another Litter Subsidy (PALS) program to provide spay and neuter services for low-income pet guardians in the City of Edmonton and surrounding communities;
  - Offering Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) services for feral cats outside of the City of Edmonton;
  - Operating a Mobile PALS Unit to increase the accessibility of spay and neuter services for low-income pet guardians in the City of Edmonton;
  - Sterilizing all dogs, cats, and rabbits adopted to the community; and,
  - Developing communication, education, and advocacy messaging about the importance and benefits of spaying and neutering pets.
- EHS believes that the health benefits (both at an individual and population-level) of sterilization significantly outweigh the risks. For owned animals, EHS encourages pet guardians to discuss the most appropriate age for sterilization with their veterinarian.

### References

1. Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (2019) Position Statement on Neutering of Dogs and Cats. <https://www.canadianveterinarians.net/documents/neutering-of-dogs-and-cats-position-statement>
2. Alberta Animal Health Source (n.d.) Spaying and Neutering: An Important Procedure for Your Pet. <https://www.albertaanimalhealthsource.ca/content/spaying-and-neutering-important-procedure-your-pet>
3. B.C. Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (2015) Position Statement on Companion Animal Overpopulation. <https://spca.bc.ca/programs-services/leaders-in-our-field/position-statements/position-statement-on-companion-animal-overpopulation/>

4. American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (n.d.). Spay/Neuter Your Pet.  
<https://www.aspca.org/pet-care/general-pet-care/spayneuter-your-pet>