



Regulations Mandating Spay/Neuter

The NYC Council made amendments to the city's administrative code mandating the sterilization of all dogs and cats sold in pet shops if they are at least eight weeks old and weigh 2 pounds beginning 2015.

NYSVMS Position

NYSVMS believes dog and cat population control is a primary welfare concern of society today. While spaying and neutering can help control pet overpopulation, we do not support government regulations mandating spaying and neutering of privately owned dogs and cats.

We believe the pet owner should have the individual freedom to make medical and surgical decisions for their pets after consultation with their veterinarian.

Facts:

- Recent scientific research illustrates that the surgical procedures required on animals at a young age demonstrates serious long term health consequences for the animal as a result of this procedure. This is supported through recent evidence-based articles published by the American Veterinary Medical Association, the international authority of animal health.
- Mandatory spay/neuter laws are ineffective in controlling populations of unwanted dogs, unfair to responsible breeders and owners, and not in the best interests of the animals.
- The American College of Theriogenologists states that spaying and neutering "prior to puberty or sexual maturity may make the risks of some diseases higher in certain breeds or individuals [dogs; therefore] the option to leave an animal intact must be available to the pet owner".
- A study conducted by Rutgers University indicates that sterilizing a dog before 1 year of age "significantly increases the risk of osteosarcoma (bone cancer)..." In the introduction to this study, Larry S. Katz, chair of the Animal Sciences department at the university, states "the decision of females may be more complex, further emphasizing the need for individualized veterinary medical decisions, not standard operating procedures for all patients".
- Some studies have shown that specific breeds are significantly impacted by the effects of juvenile spay/neuter. A study conducted by the Center for Exceptional Longevity Studies at Purdue University found, for example, that Rottweilers spayed after they were 6 years old were 4.6 times more likely to reach 13 years of age than those sterilized at a younger age.
- A study conducted by the UC-Davis School of Veterinary Medicine on Golden Retrievers, published by the online scientific journal PLOS ONE, and highlighted by the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association in 2013, found that "early neutering was associated with an increase in the occurrence of hip dysplasia, cranial cruciate ligament tear, lymphosarcoma, hemangiosarcoma, and mast cell tumor".
- Few dog show champions come from pet store stock. These pet owners are not typically the source of stray dogs and would simply buy elsewhere. As a result of the NYC Council's legislation, pet shops will require that suppliers provide animals that have already been spayed/neutered. This raises the possibility of kittens and puppies castrated without anesthesia, or procedures done by minimally trained laypersons in very unsanitary conditions.

NYSVMS represents the interests of licensed veterinarians across New York State and New York City. As the protectors of all animals and their welfare in New York state, veterinarians are duty bound to provide the highest caliber of care and welfare to any animal.