



# February is Spay and Neuter Awareness Month

## The reality

In 2011, a total of 397 unwanted kittens and 133 unwanted puppies were brought into our care due to pets not being spayed or neutered by their owners.

It's a fact that every year, thousands of dogs and cats in Canada end up in animal shelters because there just aren't enough homes for them. Many of these pets are euthanized because they are unhealthy or develop behavioural problems. Thousands more homeless pets roam the streets of our neighbourhoods and are undernourished, ill, and consequently pose a threat to public health and safety. Spay or neuter surgery can help prevent this by keeping our pet population under control.

It's also a fact that spaying and neutering can reduce the chances of your pet getting diseases like testicular or mammary cancer.

Did you know the majority of **dogs hit by vehicles** and the majority of **dog bites** involve **unneutered males**?



## What we've done

Every dog, puppy, cat, kitten, and rabbit adopted from the PEI Humane Society is spayed or neutered before going to its new home.

Last year, our Shelter Veterinarian, Dr. Dunn-MacLean, neutered 271 male cats in our treatment room, while another 302 female cats, 223 dogs, 107 puppies, and 17 rabbits were altered at local veterinary clinics.

## Other facts

We support juvenile spay or neuter surgery and the **Canadian Veterinary Medical Association recommends neutering prior to 5.5 months of age**. Dogs and cats can reproduce by the time they are six months old, and sometimes even earlier. Having a litter can put a female's life at risk from complications that may arise during the birthing process. In addition, responsibly caring for a litter – providing food, veterinary care, vaccines, deworming, socialization, etc. – costs a lot more than spay or neuter surgery.

**Both male and female cats who have not been altered can spray urine** – it's a natural behaviour designed to help them attract a mate. Spaying or neutering your pet early can prevent this behaviour before it starts.

**Heat cycles in female cats last from several days to two weeks or longer**. During a heat cycle, female cats yowl, pace, and seem uncomfortable. Unless she is spayed or gets pregnant, a female cat will repeat this heat cycle **every two to three weeks**.

**Female cats can breed 3-4 times a year and have an average of 4 kittens per litter**. Once those kittens are 5-6 months old, they can breed too. In just seven years, one unspayed cat and her offspring can produce more than **450,000 cats!**

**Female dogs can breed twice a year, with an average litter size of 6-10 puppies**. In just seven years, one unspayed dog and her offspring can produce more than **4,000 dogs!**

**Many pet owners who let their pets breed believe they can find good homes** for the young animals and intend to spay/neuter their pet after the first litter. The sad reality is that the majority of these litters end up in a shelter. For people that want that experience, there are alternatives such as becoming pet foster parents for an expecting cat or dog. For more information on our pet foster parent program visit: [www.peihumanesociety.com/volunteer](http://www.peihumanesociety.com/volunteer)

**Talk to your veterinarian** to obtain more information regarding this life saving procedure and **don't let financial reasons prevent** you from having your dog or cat neutered. Islanders most in need may qualify for **Spay Aid PEI's** spay/neuter assistance programs. To find out more visit [www.spayaidpei.com](http://www.spayaidpei.com).

# Please spay or neuter your pets!