

### Early Age Spay/Neuter Information

Spaying and neutering animals is critical to maintaining a healthy pet population, and preventing the euthanasia of puppies and kittens for space. It is an integral part of keeping Austin No Kill. Any animal adopted from Austin Pets Alive! will not be legally transferred into the care of their adopter until the spay or neuter is completed.

#### **APA! vs Private Practice?**

Any animal adopted out by APA! can be spayed or neutered here. In most cases adopters pay a \$100 surgery deposit, which is refunded after surgery is complete. This is awarded on a case by case basis. If an adopter chooses, they can have the spay or neuter done at their private vet clinic. In this case, once proof of the spay/neuter is sent through, we will refund the \$100 deposit and complete the adoption. We require that this is completed within 30 days of adoption.

#### **Age Requirements for Spay/Neuter**

APA! policy requires that an animal be at least 2 lbs in weight and 8 weeks of age as well as healthy (ringworm/heartworm positive is fine, but animals with an active URI or GI issues will need to be rescheduled), in order to be fixed.

The American Veterinary Medical Foundation "supports the concept of pediatric spay/neuter in dogs and cats in an effort to reduce the number of unwanted animals of these species. Just as for other veterinary medical and surgical procedures, veterinarians should use their best professional judgment based on the current scientific literature in deciding at what age spay/neuter should be performed on individual animals."

#### **Cats:**

The 2017 [Veterinary Task Force on Feline Sterilization Recommendations for Age of Spay and Neuter Surgery<sup>1</sup>](#) is a consensus document put forth by the Veterinary Task Force on Feline Sterilization for Age of Spay and Neuter Surgery. In addition to the AVMA, it also has been endorsed by the American Association of Feline Practitioners, Association of Shelter Veterinarians, American Animal Hospital Association, Winn Foundation, Catalyst Council, Cat Fancier's Association, and The International Cat Association. This document recommends that any feline not intended for breeding be spayed or neutered under five months of age.

#### **Dogs:**

A 2014 study by UC Davis compared the rates of certain medical concerns later in life, between fixed and unfixed purebred Golden Retrievers. The study found that the dogs that were fixed before puberty had higher incidences of hip dysplasia, cranial cruciate ligament tear, lymphosarcoma, hemangiosarcoma, and mast cell tumor. Many vets have extrapolated this to refer to all dog populations, and are recommending that dogs are not neutered until after puberty (6 months).

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<http://www.winnfelinefoundation.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/fix-by-five-focus-version-4-9-16.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

APA! does not believe that this study is relevant to our spay/neuter policy. The study was limited to a specific pure breed, which is not reflective of our dog population, and refers to conditions that Golden Retrievers are genetically predisposed to. To date, there has been no study that demonstrates health risks to mixed breed dogs.

We do, however, have information about diseases that are reduced across the board with an early age spay/neuter. Fixing an animal significantly or completely reduces chances of mammary, testicular and other reproductive cancers, as well as complications from heat cycles like pyometra that can be life-threatening.

It is the opinion of APA! that due to the known health benefits, as well as the crucial link it plays in controlling the unwanted pet population in Austin and preventing unnecessary euthanasias, spaying and neutering at the time of adoption for any animal over 8 weeks of age is still the best option.