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WHY SPAY OR NEUTER YOUR EXOTIC PET?

Most people are aware of the importance of having their dog or cat altered. There are the health benefits such as avoiding the risks of many types of cancers, uterine infections, etc., as well as reducing the number of homeless puppies and kittens. However, people are often not aware that there are just as compelling reasons to have their rabbit, rat, or even iguana spayed or neutered.

Rabbits, guinea pigs, and rats are all at high risk of developing tumors that can be drastically reduced if they are spayed. All three species have a high incidence of uterine and ovarian cancer if they are not spayed. Uterine cancer is one of the main causes of death in unspayed female rabbits over 3-4 years of age. Guinea pigs commonly develop uterine neoplasia, as well as metritis (uterine infection). It has recently been discovered that rats that are spayed while young have a drastically reduced incidence of mammary tumors, which are one of the most common medical problems seen in rats.

Behavior problems are much more common in unaltered pets. Both male and female rabbits that are unaltered commonly spray urine in a manner similar to tom cats marking their territory. Hormone related aggression is common in rabbits that haven't been spayed or neutered. Male iguanas often exhibit severe aggression once they become sexually mature. Unfortunately, once these behaviors are well developed it is fairly difficult to reverse them even if altering is done at an older age. Prevention by spaying and neutering at a young age is much easier than trying to deal with behavioral problems once they have become ingrained.

Unfortunately, overpopulation is fast becoming a problem in rabbits, just as in dogs and cats. Every year millions of baby bunnies are sold as Easter pets. Many end up dumped in shelters once the novelty wears off, and too many of these end up euthanatized due to a lack of facilities to house them and homes to adopt them. As cute as a litter of baby bunnies can be, it is not in the interest of either the mother or the rabbit population in general to breed your rabbit. If you have a rabbit and want more, please have yours altered and then contact your local humane organization or the House Rabbit Society and see about adopting one that needs a home rather than breeding a new litter.

Feel free to contact our office if you have any questions about having your pet spayed or neutered.

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