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A box of kittens left at the door of the Prince Rupert SPCA shelter.



Two dogs surrendered to the Quesnel SPCA.



A cage with 24 hamsters abandoned at the Vancouver shelter.

Too many animals!

Every year the SPCA is flooded with animals - unwanted pets surrendered to the shelter, strays and often box-loads of kittens, guinea pigs, puppies, rabbits, even ferrets dropped off outside shelters by irresponsible people that do not identify themselves. Recently someone wheeled a shopping cart with a cage holding 24 hamsters to the Vancouver shelter and then ran away!

Pet overpopulation is a **serious problem** in almost all BC communities. In BC's north and interior there are too many dogs and not enough homes. In practically every town and city there are wandering cats that are not neutered adding to the increase in the cat population. Some shelters have over 200 cats at a time!

The solution is actually pretty simple. Make sure your pets aren't contributing to pet overpopulation by **getting your cats, dogs and rabbits neutered** or, in the case of small animals like hamsters, guinea pigs, gerbils and mice, keeping males and females separate at all times. **By the way, looking for a hamster? Visit your local shelter!**

What would you do if you could no longer keep your pet?

DO THE RIGHT THING.

True or False? Neutering is the term just used for sterilizing a male cat or dog.

Neutering is a general term for when any animal has an operation to prevent reproduction - male or female. However, neutering is also the **technical term** for when a male animal is castrated (spaying for females). We admit, this is a little **confusing**. In fact, neutering, sterilization, "fixing," spaying and castration are all terms associated with **preventing pets from having offspring**.



BE RESPONSIBLE.

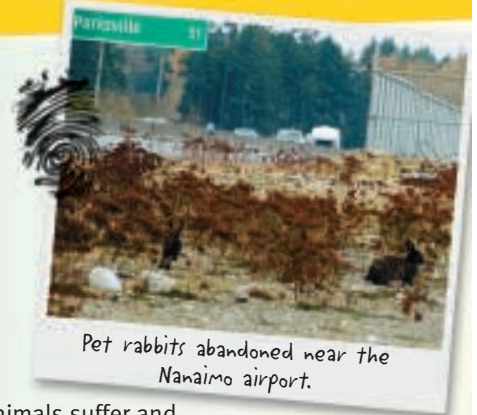
Try your best to find your pet a new, loving home.

Surrender her to your local SPCA. Give them as much background info so they can re-home her.

Pet Abandonment - It's a Crime!

Ever seen a bunch of red-eared slider turtles in a pond, a colony of cats hanging around by railway tracks or a herd of rabbits in a park? Chances are all these animals have been abandoned by their guardians. Many people mistakenly believe that it is all right to just let their pets go and that the animals will somehow take care of themselves. But, abandoning animals is a crime, whether you release them into the wild or leave them outside of the SPCA without taking proper responsibility and notifying staff. In fact, if you are caught, the SPCA can charge you with cruelty to animals.

What's worse is that most abandoned animals suffer and live short lives. Pet rabbits, for example, cannot live on their own in the wild. They suffer from diseases and are attacked by raccoons, coyotes, dogs, cats, owls, hawks and other predators. Also, in some cases, they don't get enough food to eat and they slowly starve to death.



Pet rabbits abandoned near the Nanaimo airport.



I don't know how to add - but I sure can multiply!



Every year the SPCA gets thousands of cats and kittens dropped off at our shelters.

Why? People haven't spayed or neutered their cats.

It doesn't take long for the numbers to add up. **You do the math...** see how many kittens can be born in just two years from Belle, an unspayed female cat.



1. Belle has two litters of kittens each year. Each litter has six kittens. How many kittens does she have in one year?

$$2 \times 6 = \text{star}$$

2. In two years how many kittens does Belle have?

$$2 \times \text{star} = \text{circle}$$

5. In total how many cats can be born from one unspayed female cat in just two years?

$$\text{circle} + \text{circle} = \text{starburst}$$

3. Half of Belle's kittens are female. How many females has she had in 2 years?

$$\text{circle} \div 2 = \text{rectangle}$$

4. Belle's female cats haven't been spayed either. They have as many kittens in a year as Belle. All together how many kittens do they have in one year?

$$\text{rectangle} \times \text{star} = \text{rectangle}$$

*** The answer does not include the fact that Belle's female kittens of the first litter can have kittens in the first year, and in the second year. This would make the number of kittens add up even more quickly. For a real math challenge, factor this in and try to figure out how many kittens there would be. WE THINK IT IS ALMOST 500 CATS!**





6



FACT or FICTION?



It is expensive to have my pet spayed or neutered.

Fiction: The cost may seem like a lot, but it is a one-time cost. Over the long-term the benefits of your pet not getting certain types of cancers, having calmer behaviour and not adding to the pet overpopulation problem, far outweigh the initial cost.

It will hurt my pet.

Fiction: The surgery is done after pets are given a drug to make them sleep (anesthetic). They don't feel the surgery at all and recover quickly.

Male cats don't need to be neutered because they don't have the kittens.

Fiction: Male cats can be an even bigger part of the pet overpopulation problem. They can be responsible for hundreds of kittens being born each year because they can mate with several female cats each year.

A kitten can have kittens.

Fact: Yes, a kitten can have her first litter of kittens as early as 5 months old. It is important to get your kitten spayed when she is 5 or 6 months old.

Spring is when cats mate - so book a date before it's too late!



WOW, 168!* That's a lot of kittens. If this cycle were to continue, in seven years Belle could be responsible for 420,000 cats!



And two years later . . .

Because there are too many cats being born, shelters end up full of adult cats waiting for homes.



Some cats end up stray, foraging for food.



RABBIT NOMENCLATURE: KIT = Baby HERD = Group
DOE = Female BUCK = Male



$1+1=8$
 $8 \times 2 = 16$
 $16 \times 2 = 32$
 $32 \times 2 = 64$

→ Did You Know?

Theoretically, a doe can have up to 8 litters a year with an average litter of 8 kits.

Depending on their size and breed, rabbits can reproduce at 4 to 6 months of age.

... so you think Cats can Multiply Meet the MULTIPLYING CHAMPION

Think about this mathematically. Say Mopsy has a litter of 8. Let's assume that half of Mopsy's litter is female. How many litters will Mopsy and her 4 daughters have in a year?

Well, the 4 daughters will mature at 4 months. Then, in 30 days, each doe can have her first litter. That's a total of 5 litters per doe in the year. Mopsy will also have another 8 litters. When you add it up, that's 28 litters — 224 baby bunnies. Yikes! That's an a-BUN-dance of bunnies!

Why Neuter a Rabbit?

The most OBVIOUS reason the SPCA encourages neutering of rabbits is to help control pet overpopulation, but did you know that there are many other good reasons to neuter your pet rabbit?

- Does your rabbit spray urine? Rabbits spray, especially bucks, to "mark" their territory when they reach sexual maturity. Neutering your rabbit will help prevent this unpleasant behaviour. Neutering can also:
 - ✓ Decrease aggressive behaviours such as biting, lunging, circling and growling
 - ✓ Reduce excessive chewing and digging
 - ✓ Make litter box training easier
 - ✓ Prevent cancers from developing (almost 80% of unspayed does will develop uterine cancer)



Neutering my pet will positively change my pet's behaviour.

Fact: Behaviours like aggression, spraying (cats & rabbits) and wandering (escaping) are usually no longer a problem once an animal is neutered because these behaviours are connected to hormones that are reduced by the surgery. Good behaviours aren't affected.

First Adoption Option

Looking for a new family pet? A rabbit perhaps? Is your entire family ready to make the commitment and contribute to care for a new pet? IF SO, MAKE THE SPCA YOUR FIRST ADOPTION OPTION. Many people don't think about the SPCA as the place to go to adopt a rabbit or small animal. But the truth is, in some shelters we have more small animals than cats and dogs! Shelters are full of animals awaiting new forever homes. Give SPCA animals the second chance they deserve!



$64 \times 2 = 128$
 $128 \times 2 = 256$
 $256 \times 2 = 512$
 $512 \times 2 = 1024$

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quick facts:

Vancouver SPCA Animal Hospital

THEN:
Opened:
August 9, 1976

Goal:
To neuter as many animals as possible in the Lower Mainland

Number of animals neutered in year one:
12,032

NOW:
Number of vets on staff:
4

Number of animals neutered in 2005:
approximately 5,000

As the pet overpopulation problem in the Lower Mainland decreased (with the help of many local veterinary clinics helping to neuter shelter animals as well) the Vancouver SPCA Hospital expanded beyond neutering to treat all types of animal health issues.

Prince George Spay/Neuter Clinic

Opened:
July 2005

Number of animals expected to be neutered in year one:
4,000

Number of vets on staff:
1

did you know?

It takes about 5 minutes to neuter a male cat & 15 to spay a female.



Dr. O'Brien with Lilly — another spayed SPCA animal!

It's a Problem We Can Fix!

The BC SPCA is committed to reducing the pet overpopulation problem. Most of our 36 shelters now neuter all cats and dogs prior to adoption. Many SPCA Branches also have special programs to help people get their animals neutered. We also operate two animal hospitals - a new Spay/Neuter Clinic in Prince George and a veterinary hospital in Vancouver. Every year our two clinics will neuter 9,000 animals in BC!

Big Kid member, Dr. Shaunne O'Brien is one of the veterinarians at the Vancouver SPCA Hospital. Dr. O'Brien is an animal champion helping to put an end to pet overpopulation.

Kids Club: How long have you been a vet?
Dr. O: 17 years

Kids Club: How many surgeries will you do in a day?
Dr. O: Up to 15, many are spays and neuters of dogs, cats and rabbits. I also do all kinds of surgeries to help hurt animals.

Kids Club: What are some of the excuses people give for not neutering their pets?
Dr. O: 1) They will become fat and lazy. 2) That it's unnatural. Neither is true. Any pet can become overweight and when they do, they should be fed fewer calories. As for being unnatural, animals don't notice anything different.

Kids Club: Why did you become a veterinarian?

Dr. O: Well, I wanted to be a human doctor but attended an information session about the veterinary program at the University of Saskatchewan. After that, I thought about becoming a vet, that way, I could help people and animals!

Kids Club: What do you do besides the actual surgery to promote neutering?
Dr. O: I always discuss neutering with clients at some point when they visit with their pet.

Kids Club: What's the one message you want to send to Kids Club members?
Dr. O: Pet overpopulation is a serious problem. Thousands of animals have to live a difficult and often short life as strays and shelters are overcrowded because there are not enough homes for them. Please have YOUR pet neutered.

Kids Club: Do you have any pets?
Dr. O: Yes, a dog, some cats, small animals and even some birds! All of my animals are from SPCA shelters. Most of them need special medical care or extra TLC!

Want to know more about being a vet? Read more about Dr. O'Brien at www.sPCA.bc.ca/kids



256x2=512
512x2=256