



## DESEXING

Desexing removes the sexual urge from both dogs and bitches.

If you do not intend to breed from your dog surgical desexing has undoubted advantages both in the male and the female.

### MALES

In the male dog it removes the sexual urge so that if the dog gets the scent of a bitch in oestrus he is unlikely to show any interest, which in certain breeds can be an undoubted advantage, and is unlikely to want to escape your yard in order to look for potential girlfriends. A lot of unsterilised male dogs have an unfortunate habit of wanting to leave their urine scent everywhere – including inside the house, or mounting items of household furniture or visitors legs! Desexing prevents or calms this type of behaviour. When an entire male gets older, incidence of prostate and testicular cancers are much greater in comparison to desexed dogs. Desexing can also help to prevent some aggressive or dominant behaviours if they are due to hormones.

### FEMALES

Desexing the bitch prevents oestrus (heat) as well as breeding. She will not come into heat and therefore will not have to be confined and deprived of her usual exercise and companionship which otherwise will occur usually twice a year when she is in heat for at least 3 weeks each time.

Owners are often tempted to have at least one litter from a bitch. There appears to be a general misconception that having a litter will improve her temperament. There is no scientific evidence to support this theory whereas it has been proven that desexing prevents diseases of the reproductive tract, and also reduces the risk of tumours of the mammary glands (breast cancer). Once desexed the bitch will have no oestrus and will not have unwanted puppies or phantom (false) pregnancies, which in some bitches causes a lot of distress. The older unsterilised bitch can get a serious infection in her uterus, which causes a condition called pyometra, this is treated by sterilizing her, but at great risk to her life if left too late.

### **Disadvantages?**

It is a common fallacy that a desexed dog will become fat and lazy. Remember that all service animals, Guide Dogs, Hearing Dogs and Dogs for the Disabled are routinely desexed. Judicious feeding of a scientifically prepared complete diet without excessive titbits should adequately control any problems of obesity, just as it does in the entire animal.

Another common fallacy is that the desexed dog loses character. Admittedly desexing is often carried out, both in dogs and bitches, for certain behavioural abnormalities and often dogs will become more gentle but they lose neither their spirit nor their intelligence and provided they are not allowed to become obese are just as active as the entire counterpart.

Thus there are many advantages and few disadvantages to having your dog desexed.

Both dogs and bitches are usually desexed between 6-12 months of age although the operation can be carried out at any time. Your veterinary surgeon will be more than happy to discuss the details with you.

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