



Opinion
Mary-Anne Fiebig
Mary-Anne is an Australian volunteer with Animals Fiji and working as a marketing specialist. She is based in Savusavu. As part of her volunteer scope, she is writing a series of articles related to the work that the organisation does and promotes, more specifically in the North. The views expressed are of Animals Fiji and not of Fiji Sun.

ANIMAL CARE

Taking Care of Your Pet, Importance of Desexing



Stray dogs are attracted to rubbish bins to search for food.

Taking care of your animal is a big part of being a responsible pet owner.

It is really important to make sure your pet can't have babies or attract other dogs that might make them pregnant. This can be done by an operation on the pet, which in Fiji is called desexing.

Veterinarians often use the words, like sterilising, or spaying for females and neutering for males, these words mean the same thing as desexing.

Those who care for animals all recommend that pet owners desex their pets. This aids in reducing human-animal conflict and builds harmonious communities. Pet owners should desex any animal in their area that they feed. Here are some good reasons why.

Desexing your pet stops unwanted pets being born. This is better for your pet's health, but it is also better for you. Unwanted kittens or puppies will need new homes, or for you to take care of them which can be difficult or expensive.

Keeping the litter means you will need to spend money to keep them healthy. As well as having them desexed to keep them from having more animals that you will need to care for!

For males and females, it prevents them from getting some cancers and other serious diseases that can cause a lot of pain – and expense.

Even though getting your pet desexed costs some money at the start, it can save you a lot of money in the future.

Other advantages of having your pets desexed are:

- they are often better behaved
- they are more loyal to you and stay around your home
- they are less likely to stray and join with packs of other dogs or look for a mate
- they are less likely to get sick or injured
- they are less likely to get fleas and ticks from other dogs and will bark less.

It is good for our community as there will be fewer groups of stray dogs that may bite humans, and less noise from barking and fighting with other dogs. It will also mean that there will be fewer sick or injured animals on the streets and beaches. And there will be less rubbish scattered or torn apart by a starving stray dog looking for food! This helps everybody – the animals, you and your neighbours – the whole community!

Not only is it good for our community but when visitors come to Fiji, they will feel safer and know that the people of Fiji love and care for



DID YOU KNOW?

An unspayed female dog, her mate and all of their puppies and their puppies puppies, if none are ever neutered or spayed add up to:

- 1 year = 16
- 2 years = 128
- 3 years = 512
- 4 years = 2,048
- 5 years = 12,288
- 6 years = 67,000 dogs



their animals.

That is a great impression for them to leave with, increasing the chances that they will come back and help the economy through their holiday spending.

So having your pets desexed is a good thing. It helps animals stay healthy, saves you money and makes our community a better place. It's a way of showing that we care about our animals and our community.

When should you have your pet desexed? This is something you should discuss with your veteri-

Your Pet in Fiji?

Looking after the cats and dogs you feed is a big part of being a responsible pet owner and community member. Making sure your pet can't have babies or get into trouble with other dogs is super important. You can do this through a simple operation called "spaying" for female pets and "neutering" for male pets, which in Fiji is often called "desexing."

People who really care about their community and animals should get any dog or cat they feed spayed or neutered. **Here's why:**

1. No Unwanted Babies: Getting your cat or dog spayed or neutered stops them from having babies that you might not be ready for. This is good for your pet's health, but it's also good for you. Baby kittens or puppies can be hard to find homes for, and taking care of them can be tough and expensive.

2. Healthier Pets: Spaying or neutering can actually help your pet stay healthier. It lowers the chance of certain kinds of cancers and serious diseases. Even though there's a cost upfront, it can save you lots of money in the long run.

3. Better Behaved and Loyal: Cats and dogs that have been spayed or neutered often behave better. They stick close to home and are less likely to run away or get into fights. They also tend to get sick less often, which means fewer trips to the vet and less money spent!

4. Good for Your Community: When you spay or neuter your pet, it's not just about your pet—it's about the whole neighbourhood. There will be fewer stray dogs causing problems and making noise. You'll also have fewer sick or hurt animals on the streets and beaches. This makes your community a nicer place to live for everyone.

5. Impress Visitors: Choosing to spay or neuter your pet shows that you care about animals and your community. When people visit Fiji and see that pets are taken care of, they feel safer and happier. This could bring more tourists, which helps our local economy.

6. Right Time to Do It: The best time to spay or neuter your pet is usually around 4-6 months old. But, don't worry, your vet can give you the best advice based on your pet's needs.

Getting Help: If you're in Fiji, you can reach out to Animals Fiji for assistance. They have vet clinics in different places like Savusavu, Labasa, Nadi, and Lautoka. They even have places for animals to stay until they find a home. To find out more, call (+679) 993 6647 or visit www.animalsfiji.org.

Important News: From September 4-21, there will be a vet in Savusavu who can help at lower prices. This means you can afford medical help and spaying or neutering for your pet. To make sure you get a spot, call (+679) 998 6253.

In the end, taking care of your pet is not just about you and your pet. It's about making your community a better place and showing that we care about animals.

So, should you spay or neuter your pet? Yes! It keeps your pet healthy, saves you money, and makes Fiji a friendlier place for everyone. Let's show we care about our animals and our community by making this important choice.

nary clinic. It is best to do it as soon as the animal can reproduce, which is 4-6 months. But again – visit or phone your vet professional who will give you the best advice for your animal.

Animals Fiji helps animals all around Fiji, with vet clinics in Savusavu, Labasa, Nadi and Lautoka and they also hold outreach clinics in other areas. The Nadi Clinic also has a shelter and place for animals to stay until they are adopted.

Please contact Animals Fiji on (+679) 993 6647 or visit their website at www.animalsfiji.org. Important:

Savusavu will have a veterinarian on site from 4-21 September. We can offer advice and discount rates so that you can afford medical attention and desexing. Be sure to call and book for an appointment – (+679) 998-6253

We all need to remember that caring for our pets is an important part of pet ownership. Caring for them means having them desexed for their benefit and yours, and our community. Help us care for our community by caring for your pet.

Title: "Should You Spay or Neuter"