

# Pediatric Spay/Neuter

This page last updated 7-30-09



Is your vet, rescue, breeder, shelter or pet store doing their part to help end euthanasia of healthy dogs, puppies, cats and kittens? Ask them why not?

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## Statement from the American Veterinary Medical Association (AMVA)

"Lowering the number of stray dogs and cats is a high priority for anyone who cares. The AVMA is on record as endorsing early age spay/neuter. As president of the AVMA, I feel it is unconscionable not to use early spay/neuter since it is safe and very very effective in achieving our goals."

-Dr Sherbyn Ostrich, President, AVMA, 1996

Dr Leo Lieberman, while president of the Connecticut Vet Medical Assn, started doing pediatric spay/neuter in 1970. Research shows that other vets had been performing early spay/neuter for at least 20 years before him. Source: AHA

## History of Spay/Neuter Surgery

In the 1940's and 1950's, veterinarians had primitive anesthetics, monitoring equipments, and surgical tools. Anesthetics were not terribly safe, especially for young animals; sophisticated surgical instruments that are now used to find a tiny uterus did not exist. Veterinarians were mainly men, working with horses and cattle — heavy, physical work. They had big hands, and had to find that uterus with their fingers. Since a uterus is bigger and much easier to find after an estrus or after having a litter, the advice of waiting until after the first estrus or after a litter began and persists decades later. Often the practitioner selected the spay/neuter age of the animals based on his convenience and what was appropriate to his skill and equipment.

Now jump forward to the 1960's. It is discovered that the incidence of mammary cancer (which is four times higher in intact bitches than in human women) can be reduced by over 96.4%, if we spay before the first estrus. So the veterinary profession begins teaching this, and now with better equipment, better drugs, and safer methodologies, veterinarians began to spay before the first estrus. Determining when the first estrus begins presents problems, however. It differs among large dogs (12-14 months), small dogs (around 6 months), and cats (as early as 4-5 months). Since it's too confusing to tell owners different ages for different size dogs (and how do you guess on the mixed breeds) six months becomes the standard, with the goal being to neuter the majority of dogs before their first estrus. Although this practice is not based on objective scientific data (and is too late for many cats), for decades this is what veterinarians are taught.

As for cats, they received little attention and respect until the 1980s. Veterinarians were trained, for the most part, to treat them like little dogs and the 6-month standard was applied, with no thought to the fact that many cats became pregnant at 4 and 5 months of age. The 6-month standard simply evolved. It was not based in research or particular scientific reason.

At this time, pediatric spay/neuter is the best way to stem the staggering pet overpopulation and allows us to combat the single largest cause of death in companion animals: **homelessness** due to overpopulation. Regardless of the industry, with the continual and sometimes rapid technological improvements and trends, **some will be on the leading edge, some in the middle, and others left behind.** This is no different for the animal industry. In over 100 years of adopting animals in the United States, the overpopulation problem continues to increase. It is not possible to adopt our way out of the overpopulation crisis. A "neuter before adoption" policy is a solution that is practical, possible, and healthy.

by Marci Hess

## Vet Offices in Ohio who practice Pediatric Spay/Neuter

VCA Sawmill, Dr Bando	Dublin	614-766-2222
<a href="#">RASCAL Mobile Unit</a>	Dublin OH/All of OH	614-791-7729
Lotus Vet	7206 Gooding Blvd 43015 Just N of 270	740-548-5688
Annehurst Vet Hospital	Westerville	614-882-4728
<a href="#">Animal Hospital of Polaris</a>	Columbus	614-888-4050
Village Gate Animal Hosp & Pet Resort	Grandview	614-545-4260
<a href="#">Northwest Animal Hospital</a>	Kenny/Henderson	614-451-4772
<a href="#">Forest Park Vet</a>	161/71 area	614-885-9901
<a href="#">Petlovers</a>	Reynoldsburg	614-866-1912
Westerville East	Westerville	614-890-1625
East Hilliard Veterinary Hospital	Columbus	614-876-7762
Care Pet Clinic	Columbus	614-252-4353

## Need more information?

If you don't see a vet listed in your area, contact your local Veterinary Medical Assn and ask them to give you a list of vets in the area association who practice Pediatric Spay / Neuter.  
[www.OhioVMA.org](http://www.OhioVMA.org)

Not sure who which Vet Assn is closest to you?  
Contact the Ohio Veterinary Medical Association  
614-486-7253  
[ohiovma@ohiovma.org](mailto:ohiovma@ohiovma.org)

Vets can order "Early Age Neutering: A Practical Guide for Veterinarians by AVAR & UC Davis. The video demonstrates pediatric surgeries on kittens/puppies and talks about the safety and ease of the procedure. Also demonstrates that recovery is rapid, (within an hour returning to normal activity). Lists other references that can further guide vets who are considering making the transition to pediatric sterilization. \$15.00 plus \$5.00 for S&H. Send check to AVAR, PO Box 208, Davis, CA 95617-

Animal Hospital of Worthington	Columbus	614-885-0333
Livingston Animal Hospital	Columbus	614-231-8262
Whitehall Animal Hospital Dr Duffus	Columbus	614-235-9164
<a href="#">Zanesville Animal Shelter</a> Muskingum Co	Zanesville	740-452-1077
Pet Health Plus	Delaware	740-369-1922
Cold Springs Vet Clinic	Licking County	740-366-5449
Paw Patch Dr Jorge Rosario	Cygnat	
<a href="#">Shawnee Animal Clinic</a>	Portsmouth	740-353-5758
Fayette Vet Hospital	Fayette Co	740-335-6161
Scioto Trail Animal Clinic	Southern Ohio	740-353-2280
Dr Fred Altizer	Centerburg	740-625-6748
Dr Susan Peters	Mt Vernon	740-397-6958
Cherry Valley An Hospital Dr Burgin will do at 12 wks	Newark	740-522-6056
Frederick Town Vet Clinic	Fredericktown	740-694-5926
<a href="#">Hillside Vet Clinic</a>	Mt Vernon	740-392-6891
Dr Richard Ramseyer	Utica	740-892-2610
Dr Barry Reppart	Mt Vernon	740-397-7146
Dr Laurinda Morris	Danville	740-599-5991
Dr Greg Price	Mt Vernon	740-392-6396
<a href="#">Delaware Co Humane Society</a>	Delaware	740-369-7387
<a href="#">Knox County Humane Society</a>	Knox County	740-392-2287
<a href="#">Miami Co Humane Society</a> provides ped s/n services for feral cats	Miami Co	937-698-7322
<a href="#">Miami Co Animal Shelter</a> ped s/n for kittens only, adult cat s/n too	Miami Co	937-332-6919
Dayton Animal Hospital	Montgomery Co	937-890-4744
N Main Animal Hospital	Datyon OH	937-890-4744
Bath Vet	Bath OH	330-666-0018
Animal Medical Center	Niles OH	330-652-0400
Dr Slenn	Bath OH	330-665-1400
Petguards	Cuyahoga Falls on Hardy Rd	must make appt in person
Rolling Hills Vet	Brunswick OH	330-225-6336
<a href="#">Spay Neuter Clinics.net</a>	Girard OH 44420	330-545-2255
Byland Animal Hospital	Loudonville between Cleveland and Columbus	800-325-3119 419-994-5515
Barking Lot	Findlay, Hancock Co	419-859-2275
Diamond Vet Clinic	Kenton OH	419-673-0426
<a href="#">Seven Hill Pet Clinic</a>	Cinci Area Clermont Co	513-575-9696
Liberty Veterinary Hospital	Liberty Township	513-755-9700
All Creatures Animal Hospital	1894 Ohio Pike Amelia, OH 45102	513-797-7387
All About Petcare A Vet Hospital	3410 Tytus Av Middletown, OH 45042	513-424-1626
Evendale-Blue Ash Pet Hospital	10519 Reading Rd Cincinnati, OH 45241	513-563-0410

Contact us with veterinarians to be added to this list  
614-888-2208 or [kdifrischia@gmail.com](mailto:kdifrischia@gmail.com)

0208. Or call UC Davis at 530-752-1324 or visit their web site at  
[www.calf.vetmed.ucdavis.edu](http://www.calf.vetmed.ucdavis.edu)

[Veterinary Journals](#) on pediatric spay/neuter technical information  
for your vet.

[Vet for Ceasar Millan](#) Response to controversy for pediatric s/n.

### Rescues, Shelters, Reputable Breeders, and Pet Stores

If you are a rescue, shelter or humane society, join us and many other humane organizations that are helping to stop the problem at the source. Sterilizing the adult dogs & cats is good...but it won't solve our problem. Statistics report that less than half the coupons given for low cost spay/neuter are even used. Stop the problem before it starts, don't allow a dog/pup, cat/kitten to leave your humane organization without being sterilized....after all, if a dog/pup, cat/kitten leaves your care being able to reproduce....aren't you perpetuating the problem that you work so hard to overcome?

1. Start by spaying all the females
2. Add neutering of all adult males
3. Add neutering of all young males

### Pediatric Spay/Neuter Articles

[Early Age Neutering: Perfect for Every Practice](#)  
[Early S/N Research by Marci Hess](#)  
[Pictures of Pediatric Spay/Neuter](#)  
[Auburn University & Maddie's Grant](#)  
[Pediatric Spay/Neuter Veterinary Journals](#)  
*\*excellent referral to many vet articles regarding a/s*

### Pediatric Spay/Neuter is Endorsed By:

Columbus Academy of Veterinary Medicine  
[AVMA](#)-American Veterinary Medical Assoc  
[HSUS. Humane Society of the US](#)

["excellent referral to many articles regarding s/n Veterinary Journals](#) with technical Information\_  
[Early Spay/Neuter](#)  
[Video for Vets](#)  
[Why Vets Don't do early s/n](#)  
[Early s/n in the cat](#)  
[Early Sterilization Program](#)  
[Illinois Vet Bulletin](#)  
[Dog Owners Guide](#) -  
[Early Spay/Neuter Many Years in the Making](#)  
[Early Spay/Neuter in the Cat, Winn Feline Foundation](#)  
[Early Sterilization in Dogs and Cats](#)  
[Pediatric or Early Spay/Neuter, Dr Tracy Land](#)  
[View Pictures of Pediatric Neuter](#)

#### More Veterinary Journals

[The Effect of Prepubertal Castration on the Penile Urethra of the Cat](#) - JAVMA Vol 160, No 2, Jan 1972, Herron  
[Longterm outcome of gonadectomy performed at an early age or traditional age in cats](#) - JAVMA Vol 217, No 11, Dec 2000, Howe, Boothe, Slater, Hobson, Fossum  
[Implications of Early Neutering in the Dog & Cat](#), Seminars in Vet Med & Surgery, Vol 10, No 1, Feb 95, Bloomberg & Stubbs, University of Florida  
[Gonadectomy in immature dogs: Effects on skeletal, physical, and behavioral development](#) - JAVMA Vol 198, No 7, April 91, Salmeria & Bloomberg

[The Ohio State University](#)

[FranklinCountyDogs.com](#)

[Cat Fanciers Association](#)

[Texas A & M](#)

[College of Vet Med, Univ of Minnesota](#)

[Knox County Humane Society](#)

[Massachusetts Soc for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals](#)

[American Humane Association](#)

[Doris Day Animal League](#)

[AKC](#)

[AVAR](#) (Assoc of Vets for Animal Rights)

[The American Animal Hospital Assn](#)

[ASPCA](#)

## Vet Testimonial

I have always been a huge advocate for spaying and neutering all pets. I spend a lot of time educating my clients about the necessity of sterilization for a long and healthy life for their companion animals. Unfortunately, at least 6-10 clients/year at my hospital, have the misfortune of discovering their dog was "accidentally" bred. This usually occurs because the owner did not schedule the spay/neuter before their dog reached sexual maturity (5-9 months). This is always so frustrating to me and to the owner. I have researched prepubertal sterilization for over 2 years and have been eager to begin practicing the procedure. When Mirna Bowman, one of the directors of the Columbus Dog Connection, approached me about performing early sterilizations for their organization, I was very excited!! CDC was the perfect place to start. CDC (and myself) feel very strongly about not contributing to the over population problem that has made rescue organizations, such as CDC, necessary. What better solution than not adopting out any dogs that weren't fixed! It makes perfect sense. I have been amazed at how much easier the surgery itself really is--it literally takes half of the normal surgery time, the spay incision is half the normal length, and the dogs recover in less than half the normal time. The anesthetic protocol is extremely safe. There are only two hazards, both of which are easily avoided. 1). hypoglycemia (low blood sugar): we do not fast the young dogs for the normal 12 hours before surgery; instead, they are only fasted four hours before surgery. We feed them as soon as they are standing after surgery. 2). hypothermia ( low body temperature): the puppies have a warm towel underneath them during surgery and are immediately placed on heating pads post-operatively. I have had no complications after performing this service for the CDC for over a year. I encourage all veterinarians to try this procedure. The surgery is so much easier than an adult dog or even a six month old. I would be more than happy to discuss my anesthetic protocol or answer any other questions.

My office phone number is 614-870-7008.

Thank You! Beth Logan D.V.M.

## An account of pediatric spay/neuter by CDC foster parent

The puppies were spayed at 9 weeks old. They came home the following day with only three stitches and their incision was approximately 1 inch long. One would never have known that they just had major surgery. They were playing, rolling, and tumbling with each other the very day that they came home. They had no decrease in appetite, nor did they sleep for hours due to the affect of anesthetic. Within three days, you could see that their incision was healing. They had no redness, no swelling. They never once showed signs of the stitches "pulling". When the stitches were removed, it took only two snips of the scissors and the stitches were out. The puppies didn't even notice this. In comparison, I had an older female spayed and she was about 5-6 years old. She had approximately twenty stitches and an incision about three inches long. When she came home the following day, she had no appetite, she was very tired. She had major redness and swelling. She needed 14 days to heal before the stitches could be removed. On top of this, she had two other incisions in her belly to remove mammary tumors because her previous guardians, didn't care enough to spay her at an early age.

## Part of Dr Tracy Land's web site

[Excellent info on Pediatric s/n](#)

The reasons for spaying and neutering are compelling. Overpopulation and the resulting mass euthanasia and neglect. It avoids heat cycles, unwelcome visitors fighting on the lawn, accidental pregnancies, unwanted puppies and kittens, inconvenience and expense.

Males and their owners are spared roaming and fighting, and the resulting injuries, spread of disease, and expenses. In our area, 80% of the dogs killed by cars and 80% of the cases with feline aids are unneutered males.

Better-behaved pets - Neutered pets rarely spray or mark, roam and fight. 85% of bites involve unneutered dogs.

Healthier pets - Neutered males don't have testicular cancer or the prostate problems common in intact dogs. Females spayed before their first heat cycle have 96.4% less breast cancer, a common cause of death. They have no risk of uterine infection, or the many complications associated with pregnancy, whelping or raising a litter.

But why spay and neuter the babies?

It's safer. Our mortality rate is lower. I've performed over 800 procedures with only one loss. Complications occur less often. Most compelling, in a study done by veterinary students, (completely inexperienced surgeons), their death and complication rates were lower. It's easier on the pet - anesthesia time is shorter and recovery takes only a few hours.

It completely eliminates the possibility of accidental litters. We daily hear the infamous "I didn't know she'd go in heat so soon," and "she just got out for a few minutes." The list is endless. My personal favorite is "She can't be pregnant, I chained her up when she was in heat."

It completely eliminates the possibility of intentional breeding by well meaning, but ignorant owners. The old "so the kids can have the experience", "just one litter," "we can make a little money," or "I found her a good home" that turns out to be a back yard puppy mill. Breeders can avoid having their names show up on poor quality stock and help control competition by backyard breeders. The bottom line is fewer unwanted pets, and fewer ill-bred animals filling up homes so that others go without.

Dr Tracy Land

### **Endorse Pediatric Sterilization**

It is my understanding that you have an interest in early-age sterilization.

Our organization has done extensive data collection on this subject and has recently co-produced a video with the University of California, School of Veterinary Medicine. It is entitled "Early-Age Neutering, A Practical Guide for Veterinarians." Needless to say, we and many other veterinary medical associations support and endorse early-age sterilization. Concerns about the effects, both long and short-term, of early-age sterilization surgery cited by some veterinarians as problematic have been unproven, and this is largely because they haven't read the numerous studies now available."

Teri Barnato, National Director,  
Association of Veterinarians for Animal Rights (AVAR).

### **No "Cons" to Pediatric Spay/Neuter**

As far as I'm concerned, there are no "cons" to early spay/neuter. The younger ones are up and playing the same day. No matter how good the s/n contract, you're still going to have people who will give you a hard time, saying they don't have time or never answer the phone or move away. Spay/neuter before adoption is the best solution." -- Diana Nolen, S.T.O.P.

### **No Negative Data reported with Pediatric Spay / Neuter**

"There is no up-to-date data on the problems of pediatric spay/neutering because there ARE NO PROBLEMS.

I for one believe that all animals should be spayed/neutered before purchase or adoption unless they are going to a reputable breeder. NO EXCEPTIONS. - If the animal is old enough to be purchased/adopted it is old enough to be spayed/neutered.

Current research has proven that all of the "old" (which is exactly what they are... old) concerns and myths regarding early spay/neutering are false. I defy anyone to provide CURRENT research from reputable individuals or groups that support any of the old myths regarding problems associated with early spay/neutering. Whether they are physical or mental in nature...

The following is a list of: Controlled Studies, Personal Experiences and Personal Opinions. Most of them from experts in the field. It's a lot of reading but I'll tell you up front... they all say the same thing. There is no logical reason NOT to spay/neuter at an early age..... even as early as 6 weeks old.

During my own research of this topic... the only negative information that I could find against early spay/neuter was dated at least 6 years ago or longer. Times are changing and people need to move forward. Considering the massive overpopulation of unwanted animals in this country... mandatory early spay/neuter before adoption/purchase is one of our greatest hopes for success in reducing this number. We already know that we can't count on John Q Public to do it himself... he has proven that over and over again. So the burden falls on the Breeders, the Pet Stores and the Animal Shelter/Rescue organizations. I'm sorry; it's not my fault! But if you won't do it, trust me, it won't get done... That, unfortunately, is a proven fact. " Sincerely, Amber Koeller

### **Misconceptions and Q & A about Pediatric Spay/Neuter**

Pediatric spay/neuter is safe and effective when anesthetic and surgical guidelines are followed. The theorized concerns such as the potential for stunted growth, obesity, perivulvar dermatitis vaginitis, urinary incontinence, behavioral changes, impaired immunocompetence, and urethral obstruction in male cats for early age neutering (8 weeks) are unfounded. In fact, benefits of pediatric spay/neuter surgery include, less bleeding, less stitching, less time required for surgery, fewer drugs required, quicker recoveries, near zero complications, less fasting time, and less healing time.  
by Marci Hess

#### **Comment from breeder, January 2009**

A study on increased risk of osteosarcoma in Pediatric s/n of dogs - this study focused on rottweilers, because that breed has a sky high rate of osteo, but since doggie DNA is the same, we could conclude that the rate of increased risk, but not the actual rate of occurrence would be the same.

<http://cebp.aacrjournals.org/cgi/content/full/11/11/1434>

#### **Response from Dr Tracy Land**

This often misquoted study has absolutely nothing to do with pediatric spay/neuter, as their test group was spayed or neutered at less than one year. Pediatric spay neuter is now considered prior to four months, with the **standard** age moving rapidly from six months to four. So this study in no way can be applied to any pediatric discussion, only to spayed versus intact. My conclusion from this study, and other data from elsewhere is this - spayed & neutered Rotties live longer, therefore are going to show a higher incidence of most "old age" causes of death, which includes cancers of various types. Intact Rotties have shorter than their regular short life spans due to mammary cancer and sadly euthanasia due to aggression problems (thanks to poor breeding practices in my opinion, they were consistently big teddy bears before they became popular and widely bred by folks with no clue what they were/are doing).

#### Comment

Quote from the [Dalmatian Club of America](#) - Study now appearing on website states

For physiological and anatomical considerations that are logically and medically sound, the development of the os penis is incomplete until about 12 months of age in males. Castration prior to this age impedes the development of the os penis, and the resulting immature, small os penis size may contribute to the development of clinically relevant obstructive urinary stone disease in these animals. This subgroup analysis would be very important to conduct, if possible, from the survey results as it may support the recommendation to breeders, owners and others to delay male Dalmatian castration to one year of age. "

#### Response from Dr Tracy Land

Castration prior to this age impedes the development of the os penis, and the resulting immature, small os penis size may contribute to the development of clinically relevant obstructive urinary stone disease in these animals.

That "may" is pretty telling. I can give you a stack of scientific studies like a phone book showing no problems. So the question is do they have even one study to support their supposition? If they did, wouldn't they quote it instead of saying "may" - which also means "maybe not". Where is the study?

And where is the logic? Doesn't intuitively make sense to me that a smaller bone would cause more of a problem? If the theory is that the bone causes the stones to block, wouldn't a smaller bone be a good thing? Actually, I don't think it's the bone that causes the blockage at all, but soft tissue swelling, though I'd have to consult a urologist to confirm that. Growth plates close at maturity, which stops the growth of the bone. Dalmatian size dog will close from ten to sixteen months in most cases. So if we neuter at 6, he's still not closed. Again - where is the logic (or study) that says six months is any better than six weeks?

Seems to me another case of someone reaching to support a position that isn't backed up by the science.

Tracy Land, DVM

#### Comment from Breeder, November 2007

We do not do pediatric S/N because of the increased risk of osteosarcoma in large breeds.

#### Response from Dr Tracy Land

This is an old one. If you actually read & understand these studies, the only remotely relevant finding is an increased risk of osteosarcoma in neutered vs neutered Rottweilers, which are genetically predisposed to osteosarcoma anyway. The issue of age at sterilization **IS NOT ADDRESSED**. Overall, sterilized dogs live longer than those unsterilized ones. True more osteosarc in sterilized Rottweilers, but overall they don't live as long due to deaths from other cancers & causes.

I'm attaching an [excellent article](#) from a famous veterinarian that attempts to explain some of these specific issues, one that has done a lot of our studies proving the safety of pediatric S/N. It's a little complex, but is a great example of how studies can be misinterpreted by those lacking the scientific background to understand them, and how they can be just plain misquoted to support a position that otherwise can't really be supported.

Do take the time to try to read it, and stash it away somewhere safe for future reference.

It isn't as if we who support pediatric spay/neuter choose to ignore any relevant or even possibly relevant finding. Of the dozens of studies that will stand up to peer review that have been done, the **ONLY** negative finding is a slight increase in urinary incontinence in female puppies spayed prior to 12 weeks of age. Though **the increase is slight (3%) and the finding contradicted by other studies**, we acknowledge it, attempt to err on the safe side when possible, and fairly weigh the possible disadvantage against the benefit of NBA (neuter before adoption) programs - guess what, a few animals that may be incontinent, which is treatable, doesn't outweigh millions dead. You'll almost invariably find anyone who will argue that has never spent any time in a kill facility.

#### Comment from Dalmatian Rescuer November 2007

Dalmatians have a unique uric acid metabolism, with high levels of uric acid excretion in their urine, which can make kidney and bladder stone formation a possibility.

#### Response from Dr Tracy Land

Dals do indeed have that problem. The penis is indeed smaller in dogs castrated early - BUT - not the urethra, the difference is that the erectile tissue in the penis (around the urethra) does not develop. The thought process is logical, but basically flawed in that regard. The studies on cats are 30 years old, going way back to research on the old blocked kitty problem. I believe University of Florida repeated the study on dogs fifteen years ago

**Comment**, from a Weimaraner rescue person  
99% of pediatric spays have incontinence

**Response from Dr Tracy Land**

Incontinence - If 99% of early spays were incontinent, we'd have stopped long ago - that's just absurd. One study showed a 3% increase in the risk of incontinence if female dogs spayed prior to 3 months, though that finding has not been the case in several other studies. The significance of a possible 3% increase in a treatable problem pales in comparison to six million dead annually due to overpopulation. I personally have done thousands of pediatric spays, and have NEVER ONCE had one of my pups come back incontinent. I do frequently treat incontinence in my outpatient clinic, and without exception, every single patient was spayed at or after six months, or not at all. Who ever is saying that just has absolutely no clue what they're talking about.

**Comment**, from Weimaraner Rescue

We also prefer that they are developed hormonally and structurally to their best advantage.

**Response from Dr Tracy Land**

1. Hormones? Makes no sense. A weim spayed at six months is not "hormonally" mature either, so what's the difference? We're currently collecting mature ovaries for research into an injectable method of sterilization for dogs at Auburn. They don't want us to collect six month old ovaries, as they don't yet contain the hormones needed for their research. So there really is no valid issue there.
2. Structurally - Dogs sterilized early will have slightly delayed closure of the growth plates, and therefore be a fraction of an inch taller than those sterilized later. Who cares? I do think this is a valid point for dogs being shown at conformation, as they will not develop quite the same extent of secondary sex characteristics - such as breadth of chest or head. But, the average pet owner can't tell that difference, show dogs can't be sterilized anyway unless someone's cheating, and there is little or no difference between those spayed at six months or three. So again, logically not a valid issue there.

**Comment** from person who adopted rescue dog that was spayed at 8wks

She has too much skin around her pee pee because the early surgery stopped her maturation of her vaginal area. This causes the skin around it to keep it covered, therefore keeping it moist. This can lead to bladder infections and staph, per my vet at XXX (Columbus Ohio Area Vet Hospital).

There is a host of other things that could come from this. I have also been told that a female should be at least six months of age before spaying. When I took her to this vet at an earlier date, the Dr that saw her said that they don't do spaying at 8 weeks. I have a lot of mixed feelings about this. I don't understand why this was done at such an early age. I would have taken her to be spayed when she was six months.

**Response from Dr Tracy Land**

I can tell you that the problem being described is usually seen in overweight dogs, and the cause is the obesity, not the age at spay. The cases I have seen have, with one exception, always been overweight. One was just primary anatomical problem. I've spayed a lot of puppies, (thousands) and never seen it as a problem in one of those. Only those spayed at six months or later, that were too chubby. Puppies spayed prior to six months usually have no significant difference in the size of the vulva than those spayed at six months. This is another classic and tragic example of a vet who hasn't done his/her homework on pediatric spay/neuter, and has no experience in the area, unjustly criticizing something they don't understand. Research, tons of it, have never mentioned this a problem finding.

Tracy Land, DVM

**Comment** -sent to me by a breeder after we began discussing pediatric spay/neuter.

Kellie,  
Here again, maybe for most breeds, but NOT shihtzus! They have tiny noses, with tiny openings that don't totally open up until they are about 6 months old....so it is extremely dangerous for THIS breed especially to have pediatric s/n. I HAVE read up on it, and I have also called and talked to 22 vets, including Michigan state and Purdue!  
They said this is NOT necessary, good LORD girl, a 7 week old pup is not going to get bred, so it is ONLY COMMON SENSE, to wait a bit! Like I said, 4 months is adequate....that is how I feel, and its wrong and cruel to spay or neuter at 6-7 weeks old for a snub nosed dog....ANY snub nose dog.  
Sherry, breeder in Michigan

**Response from Dr Tracy Land**

Some special considerations have to be given to short-nosed breeds during anesthesia, regardless of their age or size. That said, it just isn't logical to say that they are at any greater risk at 7 weeks or 7 months or 7 years.

I've done hundreds of short nosed puppies, of various breeds, including many Shih Tzu's over the years and never had a problem. I have a Japanese Chin breeder, and a King Charles breeder that regularly bring me their (very expensive) pups to alter before sale. Can't get much smaller and shorter nosed. No problem. Have the vets allegedly advising against pediatric spay/neuter actually done the procedures? Or are they offering an opinion based on no experience? If they are having trouble, and I'm not, you've got to wonder about the surgeon or the protocol. Properly done, there are no problems (coming from someone who has actually done hundreds).

The younger the dog, the shorter the procedure time, and therefore the shorter the anesthetic time. Logically, that would render the anesthetic risk [lower](#) in the younger animals.