

BowWOW!

Facts, observations and musings about Our Best Friends

Friends don't let friends have litters.

Part Three: common sense

Last year, over 12 million dogs were killed in animal facilities in the United States, and this figure does not include the many pets who were thrown out of cars, left by the side of the road, or dropped in woods and fields. Yet we continue to sidestep common sense and perpetuate their destruction. Which of these myths do you still believe?

My dog will become fat and lazy if neutered.

Common sense: Fat animals are fat because they are overfed and under exercised. Did your brother-in-law become fat and lazy because he had a vasectomy? Or did he get that way because he has cheese fries with every meal and he hasn't been off the couch since the Clinton administration?

My dog won't be a good watchdog if I neuter him.

Common sense: If he was a good watchdog before the surgery, he will be a good watchdog after the surgery. He will only be losing his gonads, not part of his brain.

My dog will feel like she's missed something if she doesn't have a litter.

Common sense: As much as we might think of our dogs as peers, they are still animals. Dogs mate simply as a physiological response. There's no dating involved, no wine and soft music, no Facebook flirting. There's absolutely no thought involved, whatsoever. Consequently, there is no pining after lost love and missed opportunity. Dogs are just not wired that way. Having a litter is a physiological result of mating. A dog that snacks in the cat box just does not have the mental capacity to feel parentally unfulfilled.

Preventing dogs from having litters is unnatural.

Common sense: Humans first interfered with nature by domesticating dogs and then by breeding them to suit their purposes. The original canid, essentially the wolf, is a far cry from current dogs bred to herd, sport and lay around the house in sweaters. We domesticated dogs 15,000 years ago and in doing so, created the problem. Now, it's our responsibility to solve it. Note: it's also *unnatural* to be killing thousands of unwanted dogs in shelters every year.

We don't need to neuter males, because they aren't the ones having the litters.

Common sense: This is the most prevalent myth yet is the most ridiculous. Immaculate conception doesn't explain canine pregnancies. It takes two to tango.

I want my children to see the miracle of birth.

Common sense: Frequently animals go off by themselves to give birth, usually in the middle of the night. Teach your children instead about humaneness and kindness to all living creatures by educating them about the importance of spaying and neutering.

I can find "good" homes for all the puppies my female gives birth to.

Common sense: Finding truly good, lasting homes for puppies is very difficult. Many pets are taken to the pound or otherwise discarded once they start to grow bigger, take more time, make messes, or chew up something valuable. And, who is to ensure that your pet's offspring won't mature, breed, and contribute to the existing problem? There is no way you can guarantee these animals will be spayed or neutered. For every animal you bring into the world, one at the pound will die. Do yourself a favor and avoid the agonizing job of trying to find homes for your pet's litter. If you know your friends can provide good homes, send them to the pound. There are many animals waiting there. And their time is running out.

The operation costs too much money.

Common sense: You're right. In this community, it costs way too much. If you shop around, you'll find one vet in town who provides exceptional care *and* gets the job done for an extremely reasonable fee. Also, contact, SNAC (Spay/Neuter Alliance and Clinic) in Ridgeland. They have a long waiting list so make an appointment before you get the new puppy.

BowWOW! Is a production of Tracie Korol and wholeDog. She is a holistic behavior coach, a canine massage therapist (CMT), herbalist, and canine homeopath. Want more information? Have a question? Send a note to Tracie at letstalk@wholedog.biz or visit www.wholedog.biz.

