

## The Benefits of Spaying / Neutering Your Pet Rabbit

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Special thanks to Dr. Richard Orozco of Camboro Veterinarian Hospital in Edinboro, PA for his contributions to this article.

You have brought home an absolutely cute baby rabbit and everything goes well until he is six months old. All of the sudden, with no provocation and despite the best of care, he starts to urinate all over the house, bites you and your family members, and starts doing 'that' to any available rabbits, other pets, or human appendages.

Q. What would cause my rabbit to behave like this?

A. It is very likely that your rabbit's hormones have kicked in and he is 'feeling his oats'.

Q. Do bucks display this kind of behavior in different ways?

A. I have seen them either get aggressive (biting) or spraying (like a male cat). Some bucks do all right through the 'hormonal stage'. I also have seen the behavior correct itself over time.

Q. Can this happen with female rabbits?

A. Yes, usually not as aggressively as the males. I have seen them attempt to mate with a buck to show dominance, nip people, and display kindling behavior (ripping out hair and nesting to show that she wants to be pregnant).


Q. How do I correct this behavior?


A. By getting the bunny 'fixed' by a qualified veterinarian who specializes in rabbits.

I consulted with Doctor Richard Orozco of the Camboro Veterinarian Hospital outside of Edinboro, Pa. He mentioned that spaying or neutering rabbits has the following benefits:

 There should be less aggressive behavior, such as biting.

 Bucks should stop spraying to mark territory.

 Does should not be having 'false pregnancies'.

 There is less chance of ovarian cancer in Does and testicular cancer in Bucks.

 Litter habits should improve.


Q. I have heard that it is more expensive to get a bunny 'fixed' than a dog or cat. Why is this the case?


A. Dr. Orozco said that this is because of the anesthesia used for the rabbit. One also should note that in many cases, the organs of a rabbit are smaller than that of a dog or cat, depending on the breed.


Q. Is there a chance that my bunny would die from this procedure?


A. Yes, but the chances are slim. Better methods and anesthesia have greatly improved survival rates form years past. We always recommend finding a vet who specializes in rabbits.

I would like to leave you with a few facts:

 A single pair of rabbits can become 2,000 in one year's time.

 Because of their survival instinct, domestic rabbits have no specific breeding season, rather, the Does are spontaneous ovulators. This means that the doe is always ready to conceive.

 It can take as little as fifteen seconds for a mating to be successfully completed. This means if a buck and doe get loose, she will get pregnant unless one of them is 'fixed'.

 Many of the unwanted rabbits we take in are the result of careless pet owners. Get your pet(s) fixed so the accidents won't happen.

Please, be part of the solution to this problem of unwanted litters. Your rabbit(s) will thank you for it with a longer and more peaceful life.