

## **IMPORTANT - STERILIZATION OF YOUR DOG OR CAT**

If your adopted dog or cat is not already sterilized, Texas law requires you to have it sterilized. You should have this done no later than the date specified in your Adoption Contract.

### **WHAT IS STERILIZATION?**

“**Sterilization**” is the surgical removal of the reproductive organs of a dog or cat or the use of nonsurgical methods and technologies approved by the U.S.F.D.A. or the U.S. Department of Agriculture to permanently render the animal unable to reproduce. Following sterilization, the female dog or cat will not be able to have puppies or kittens, and the male dog or cat will not be able to make a female dog or cat pregnant.

### **WHAT METHODS OF STERILIZATION ARE AVAILABLE CURRENTLY?**

**Surgical Sterilization** - spaying and neutering: the removal of the reproductive organs (ovaries and uterus of the female; testicles of the male)

**Chemical Sterilization** - the use of chemical compounds which, when injected, will sterilize the animal (currently available only for male dogs)

### **WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF EACH METHOD?**

#### ***Advantages of Surgical Sterilization:***

- previously was the only approved method and is widely used by veterinarians
- considered safe in most cases
- may reduce hormone-related diseases such as testicular cancer or prostate disease
- may decrease unwanted secondary behavior characteristics such as roaming, marking or aggression

#### ***Disadvantages of Surgical Sterilization:***

- involves risk of complications from anesthesia and surgery
- longer recovery times and the need for post-operative care and observation
- side effects, such as vomiting, loss of appetite, lethargy, and diarrhea, are possible

#### ***Advantages of Chemical Sterilization:***

- relatively painless (usually used with sedation) and quick procedure
- eliminates risk of complications from anesthesia and surgery
- need for post-procedure care and observation is minimal
- considered safe in most cases

#### ***Disadvantages of Chemical Sterilization:***

- may not reduce hormone-related diseases such as testicular cancer or prostate disease to the same extent that surgical sterilization may do so
- allows for some continued testosterone production that may not decrease unwanted characteristics such as roaming, marking, or aggression and fighting to the same extent that surgical sterilization may do so
- side effects, such as vomiting, loss of appetite, lethargy, and diarrhea, are possible

**REMEMBER** - Only a licensed veterinarian can legally sterilize your adopted dog or cat. We provide this information paper to assist you in discussing with your veterinarian which sterilization method is better for your pet. We wish you and your pet many happy years together!