

# PET TALK

THREE NOTCH VETERINARY HOSPITAL  
PARK VETERINARY CLINIC

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## Neuter and Spay Understanding the Process



Once your pet reaches 6 months old it's time to schedule his/her neuter or spay. What should you expect on that day and the week to follow? Hopefully this article will help you to understand what your pet will experience that day.

When you've made the surgery appointment you'll be given a specific time to drop off your pet in the morning. We reserve a period of time every morning from 8 - 9:00 am for our surgery check-ins. During this time the entire staff (receptionists, technicians and animal care assistants) is dedicated to the check in procedures. Once the receptionist has the file ready, a technician will call you into an exam room to fill out the consent form. They'll ask for the best contact number for you throughout the day. This is probably the most important part of the consent form as the doctor may need to reach you after he/she has examined your pet, during the procedure, or afterward to give you an update and explain any discharge instructions. You'll also be asked questions about the general health of your pet. We need to know when your pet last ate, if they are on any medications, have any history of seizures

And, if your pet is a female, whether she has been in heat. For dogs that will grow to be medium or large breeds, the doctor will screen for any laxity in the hip joints as that can be an early indicator of hip dysplasia. If the laxity is found, the doctor will attempt to contact you to discuss this finding and decide if an x-ray of the hips should be taken while your pet is under anesthesia.



The consent form will give you the option of in-house bloodwork. This bloodwork assesses kidney, liver and electrolyte values. Most young dogs presented for neuters and spays are healthy and have normal values. However, having this bloodwork done gives us a good baseline for your pet to use for any future illnesses. If you elect not to do the screening, our protocol is to do a minimum screening to check for anemia and dehydration. If found, the doctor will call you to discuss the findings before proceeding.

We also have an option of implanting a microchip while your pet is sleeping. For dogs that have been on our puppy wellness program the microchip is included in the spay.

JANUARY  
2012

**CHECK OUT PAGE 2  
FOR INFORMATION ON  
APVES, our partner emergency  
facility, located in :**

**Calvert County  
Allied Partners Veterinary  
Emergency Services**

### Special points of interest..

- \* Bloodwork can be important.
- \* Microchips can be done at the time of the surgery.
- \* Pets are monitored just like humans are who have surgery.

### FEATURES THIS ISSUE:

<i>Front Page Neuter and Spay</i>	1
---------------------------------------	---

<i>APVES Emergency Services</i>	2
-------------------------------------	---

<i>Obedience Corner - New Year's Resolutions</i>	3
--	---

*Mission Statement  
Service Numbers  
Office Hours*

*Available on our website  
[www.threenotch.com](http://www.threenotch.com)*



Links for both locations available on our website...[www.threenotch.com](http://www.threenotch.com)

## EMERGENCY SERVICES

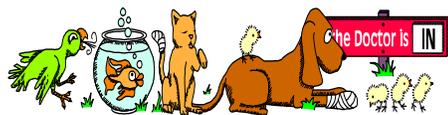
### ALLIED PARTNERS VETERINARY EMERGENCY SERVICES

Three Notch Veterinary Hospital and Park Veterinary Clinic provide after hours emergency services through our partner emergency service, Allied Partner Veterinary Emergency Services.

APVES is located just north of Prince Frederick, Maryland in Huntingtown. APVES has emergency hours weekdays: 6PM-8AM, weekends and holidays: 24 hours.

**You may reach them by calling:  
410.535.9722**

To learn more about APVES visit their website  
[www.vetmash.com/APVES](http://www.vetmash.com/APVES)



Continued from page 1

## NEUTER AND SPAY

For all others, we discount the microchip cost by 20% to help encourage you to take advantage of this identification process.

Once the consent form is signed your pet is taken into the procedure room where their vitals, (temperature, heart rate and respiratory rate) are taken. Blood is drawn for either the full panel or the minimum screening and they are given a name collar.

After the doctor has done the physical exam the animal is given premedications for the surgery, which include a pain medicine, a sedative and a medicine to help with heart rate. Within 30 minutes of premedication, anesthesia is induced and they are prepped for surgery. If warranted, the exam for hip laxity is now done. Depending on the age, breed and medical health of your pet a catheter may be placed at this time.



Once in surgery, an ECG and a blood pressure cuff is placed. The ECG is run throughout the surgery and the blood pressure is taken every 5 minutes. The animal is then surgically prepped and the procedure is started. Once the surgery is done, all animals have their ears cleaned, nails clipped, temperature taken and given a dose of an anti-inflammatory to help with pain management.

If needed they are placed on a heating pad during recovery. This is also when the microchip is placed. All surgeries are recovered in our ICU unit and once fully awake they are moved into their kennels and given water and food.

Male animals are sent home that same day, however, we like to keep the females since their surgery is more invasive and we want to keep them as confined as possible during the night and check on their incision in the morning.

Once home, your pet will most likely act as if surgery were never performed. If allowed, they'd probably run, jump and play as they normally do. However, it is very important to keep them inactive and if possible, confined for 7-10 days. This gives adequate time for the incision to heal. If you find your pet licking his/her incision, an e-collar will need to be fitted. The discharge instructions you receive when you pick up your pet will go into great detail concerning post surgery care for your pet.

Author,  
Jennifer O'Connor, DVM



## OBEDIENCE CORNER

### NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

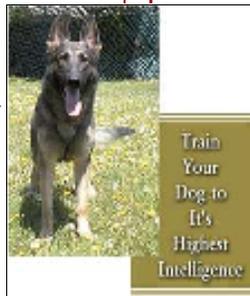
Happy New Year from the Training Corner. Every January, we all get excited about starting off the year with some resolutions. To help create some dog related resolutions and make them stick, I wanted to provide some ideas to get you off on the right foot.



(1) Make a Short List. It sounds easy but a lot of people who would like to address problems or start training with their dogs get so overwhelmed that they never start. When I first meet with a new client, they give me all sorts of information and ask me all sorts of questions. "Why does Bonzo tip over his water bowl?" "Gretta hates thunderstorms." "Sammy growls at my Mother-in-Law!" It's a tornado of information and at the end of the introduction, those poor owner's brains are probably completely overloaded and bouncing in a million directions. After we've taken a good history, I ask one question. "If you could pick 3 "dog things" you would like to change to make your life better, what would they be?" The first answer is "I want Sparky to be more obedient." I frown and the owners tries again. J The owners think for a few seconds and then they say "Oh! Well really, if Rex would just come when I called him; that would be great." Or "Well, he's really a good puppy, but I wish he would pee outside and not chew on the remote control." I smile.

The goal is to define some clear changes and avoid vague ones that you can't put your arms around. Your list must also be short at first. Otherwise, it looks too scary and you might quit before you even start. If you limit your list to three things, it helps to focus on the most important things and "declutter" the noise. If your list has 5-6 things, order them in terms of priority and stick with the top 3 for now.

(2) Seek help or get information from professionals. When trying to solve a problem or teach a new skill, there is a lot of conflicting advice and there are thousands of hits in Google. So what to do? Your first stop should be your veterinarian. For basic training, they will give you good recommendations on trainers or material. For more serious behavior problems, they will conduct a thorough exam and provide you options. For doing research on your own, the internet is a great resource. However; you should stick to websites that are sponsored by Veterinarians or Certified Applied Animal Behaviorists (CAAB). What makes these forums unique is that the information posted is backed up by formal education, research and scientific studies. The same holds true for dog books. Stick to authors who have DVM or CAAB following their names.



When you decide to seek help from a professional, veterinarians that specialize in behavioral medicine are the best in the field. They may be necessary when dealing with serious issues involving the health or safety of your dog or family. However, you typically don't need a PhD to teach Fluffy how to sit. For issues you feel you can manage with some help, contact your local trainer. Your best bet are trainers who are Certified Professional Dog Trainers (CPDT.org). There are several in our area and to be certified, you must have references, at least 5 years of experience, and take a national standardized exam. To maintain the certification, you must participate in formal training and seminars every year to stay up to date.

(3) Develop a Plan. So we have a list of goals and we've found some good resources. Now we need a plan. A training plan should contain logical steps that you can actually do. That sounds silly, but a plan that requires 8 hours of training every day for 3 weeks is not a plan most people can follow. Instead, it should lay out steps that you can fit into your daily schedule. A good plan will require time, consistency and repetition. Complex training, socialization, or behavior solutions do not occur over night.



*Continued from page 3*

**NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS**

There are no quick fixes. Once you and/or a trainer have developed some steps to follow for a few minutes each day, how do we know if the plan is working or if things are getting any better? Every plan needs to include "data". Data are things you can write down every day in a journal or spreadsheet to indicate progress. If we can collect data over time, it will give us a more complete picture. Otherwise, small improvements may go unnoticed and small setbacks might get blown out of proportion. Examples could include housebreaking accidents each day or number of times your dog growled during a walk in a week.

Training or behavior plans should be tailored or adjusted when we're not seeing the desired results or responses. How do you know when you're done? When you are seeing behavior that you like and it seems consistent, I'd say "congratulations....keep it up".



That means that you can ease up a little but dog training always requires maintenance and practice. Make the maintenance and

reinforcement of the good behavior you like a part of your daily routine and keep it enjoyable for you and your dog.



(4) Stick with the Plan and Follow Up. Many owners become discouraged when they don't see rapid results. A

good plan should always have measurable results and changes should occur quickly. However, some changes can be hard to see and we call them "baby steps". Reviewing your journal or spreadsheet will show you where you're improving. On the other hand, if you have a great day, don't assume your problems are solved or your training is complete. Permanent changes in behavior take time, consistency, and repetition, otherwise, they will fade. If you feel you're putting in the right amount of time and the data is telling you things just aren't going anywhere, follow up with your vet or trainer.

So now you are armed with some tools and ready to kick the year off with a bang (and a bark). Hopefully this discussion will help you make some fun changes that will actually last past February! Good luck and we wish you nothing but good things in 2012.

**HAPPY TRAINING!**



Brian Markowich, CPDT  
Author, Editor, & Trainer



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