

## **DESEX YOUR GIRL DOG**

This is a **Healthy Dogs, Healthy Communities** message from Roper Gulf Regional Council Animal Management Program.

*Introduction of interviewer and interviewee who will be having a conversation about the reason to get a desexing operation for your girl dogs.*

### **So what is the desexing operation that the vets do?**

The operation that the vets do takes out the dog's baby bag. This stops her having any more puppies.

We need to remember that girl dogs all have pups at about the same time twice a year. This means if we have 2 breeding female dogs in our yard, that we can have 20 puppies all at the same time. It is very hard to care for all these pups well.

We all love puppies but we need to keep in mind that puppies need a lot of good care to grow up to be strong and healthy. To care for a litter of pups properly costs a lot of money in food, worm medicine and vaccinations.

We also need to be able to find loving homes for the pups to move too once they are born.

So often being a responsible dog owner often means that it is better to have our dogs desexed.

### **But a lot of people like to let their dog have one litter before getting them desexed. Is that a good idea?**

No not really. There are a lot of risks for a girl dog if she is not desexed.

First of all once a dog is desexed she will be **less wormy and get fatter** more easily. She wont take as much food to keep her healthy which saves owners a lot of money over time.

Also if a dog has had litters of pups the **operation is harder** for the vet to do. It is safer to do the dogs before they have a litter. Doing them when they are about 6 months old is best but vets can do them from 6 weeks onwards.

There are also risks to the dog as she comes on heat and gives birth.

After each heat a girl dog is at risk of getting **an infection** in her baby bag. This infection can kill a dog. It is very common.

Girl dogs can also die while they are giving birth. The **pups can get stuck**. If the owners cannot get the mother dog to the vet for a caesarean operation it will die. This happens a lot in smaller dogs.

Dogs who are not desexed also get **breast cancer** as they get older. If they are desexed they almost never get breast cancer.

Also the cancer that dogs get on their private parts that makes them drip blood is an **STD**. Old people will remember when lots and lots of dogs had problems from this type of cancer. It is disappearing now because of desexing operations. If dogs never mate with other dogs they cannot get this type of cancer. Desexed dogs don't mate so they won't catch this type of cancer.

**So that's the story for the girl dog, but there is a bigger picture about desexing dogs for the health of everyone in the community.**

**Desexing your dog is also keeps your community safe and healthy in ways that listeners might not know about. Can you tell us about that?**

**Is it true that desexing a female dog keeps the dirt in your yard cleaner?**

Yes.

When a dog is pregnant the worms in her gut breed up quickly. When pups are born they get worms easily too. This means there are a lot of worm eggs in a yard where there are female dogs having pups.

Some of these worms are very dangerous for people. Children are most at risk from these worms. You cannot see the worm eggs they are too tiny. Children can swallow the worm eggs when they play in the dirt or the tiny worm can hatch and burrow through the children's skin.

If a yard has a lot of pups born in it the worm eggs build up in the dirt and can be very dangerous for kids or sick and old people.

If a yard just has desexed dogs living in it, the yard will have much cleaner dirt than a yard where lots of pups have been born - even though the dirt won't look any different.

**The vets say that desexing a female dog also means there will be less dog bites in your community. Is that true?**

Yes

Mother dogs become more aggressive just before they come on heat and also when they are pregnant. They are more likely to bite people coming near their yards.

Once the pups are born children are often bitten when they get too close to a mother dog's pups. These bites are often on children's faces and can scar for life.

**And we all know the story of dogs fighting over a girl dog. Desexing a female dog stops humbug and fights between dogs. That's right isn't it?**

Yes,

We all know the humbug when a girl dog is on heat ; packs of boy dogs fighting, following the girl dog around and camping outside people's houses.

When a girl dog has the operation she will not come on heat any more. The community becomes more peaceful and people can get a good night's sleep.

**And one final thing is that desexing also protects bush animals around your community.**

Feral animals are a big problem right across Australia.

Dogs that go wild kill a lot of bush animals. Also these wild dogs breed with dingos. This cross breeding with dingos is wiping out strong dingo populations. If a desexed dog ends up in the bush it does not cause nearly as many problems for the environment. A desexed pet is less likely to want to leave home too.

**So talk to the vet about desexing your girl dogs next time she is in town.**

**One rough day for your dog makes for a long and happy life.**