

# To Breed or Not to Breed?

By Sherry Woodard

Here are some reasons that people give for breeding their pets, and some things to consider:

**“We just want one litter, and then we will have her spayed.”**

Though much progress has been made toward solving the pet overpopulation problem, millions of wonderful animals are homeless, waiting in shelters for families to adopt them. Breed rescue groups have too many animals to place as well. Over 4 million pets are still put down each year in the United States for want of a home.



Without realizing it, many people contribute to the pet overpopulation problem by having “just one litter.” By not breeding your pet, you become part of the solution.

**“We will find good homes for all the babies.”**

Every day, shelters take in pets who were in good homes, but their people moved, married, divorced or had a baby – and decided they had to give up their pets. Don’t let them be pets that you have created.

**“We want a kitten from our cat (or a puppy from our dog).”**

There are no guarantees that your pet’s offspring will be just like your pet. There are many wonderful, unique animals available from your local shelter or rescue group. You can love and cherish an adopted animal just as much as the offspring of your beloved pet. Shelter staff can help you find a pet with just the right personality for your family. And, think about how satisfying it is to save a life.

**“We heard that having a litter has health benefits.”**

Actually, the opposite is true. Pregnancy does not confer any health benefits, but spay/neuter has both health and behavior benefits. Spaying or neutering greatly reduces the risk of your pet developing mammary tumors in females and reproductive organ tumors in both sexes. Neutering reduces the urge to roam, urine marking, and aggression.

There are risks associated with pregnancy and delivery. Animals sometimes have a difficult pregnancy, miscarry, or have stillborn babies or babies with defects. Your pet may need help with a surgical delivery (a Cesarean section), which could be expensive.

**“We want to get our money back on our investment.”**

Buying and breeding a purebred dog with the intention of raising money is not a realistic expectation. There is a large investment of money and time involved in breeding a dog and raising puppies responsibly until they are ready for sale.

If you'd like a purebred dog or cat, you don't have to spend a lot of money to get one. There are rescue groups for almost any breed and 25% of dogs at shelters are purebred. To locate a purebred rescue group near you, search the Internet. Here's a sample search combination: border collie + rescue + Mississippi. You can also search for specific breeds on [Petfinder.com](http://Petfinder.com).

If you're thinking about breeding your pet, please think twice – for the benefit of your pet, your family and the homeless pets across the country.

*Sherry Woodard is the animal behavior consultant at Best Friends. She develops resources and provides consulting services nationally to help achieve Best Friends' No More Homeless Pets mission.*

See also:      [Myths and Questions About Having Babies](#)  
                  [Spay or Neuter Your Cat](#)  
                  [Spay or Neuter Your Dog](#)