

TO BREED OR NOT BREED YOUR GREAT DANE

As a proud Great Dane owner, we know you care deeply about the well-being of your family member. We also know you want to do what is best for your pet. One of the best things you can do is to have your pet Dane spayed or neutered.

Why should I spay or neuter my pet?

Spaying or neutering your pet lengthens its life and improves the quality of its life with you. Spaying and neutering your Dane significantly decreases some of the health risks that often take the lives of intact pets at an early age. Mammary tumors, prostate enlargement, and uterine infections are less likely to appear in altered pets, and, as a result, these pets lead longer (2 to 3 years) and healthier lives. Unspayed Dane bitches can also be prone to false pregnancies, which can lead to further complications. A study by Purdue University showed that spayed or neutered Danes were slightly less prone to bloat than their unsterilized counterparts.

Spaying and neutering also make your Dane a much better family pet. The dog will focus more on you; the urge to find a mate will not be his first and only concern. Early neutering can prevent many behavioral problems associated with intact males, such as marking and becoming overly territorial. Spayed bitches will not go through temperament changes as their unspayed counterparts do prior to cycling.

And, it's a very real concern that there simply are too many unwanted dogs and not enough homes. Ask any Dane rescue organization .

Should I let my Dane have one litter before spaying?

No, it's not a good idea. First, each heat cycle increases the chance of mammary cancer in your pet. Second, spaying is more difficult after the Dane has come into season the first time. Allowing your Dane to have a first litter to fulfill your pet's "motherly instincts" or to "teach the

children about life” are not good reasons. First, pets do not have an emotional involvement in reproduction. Their sexual behavior is caused solely by hormones. Teaching children about the life cycle can be done with educational materials that will not create eight more unwanted Danes.

At what age should I alter my Dane?

A veterinarian familiar with Danes can best answer that question for you. It is generally considered a good idea to have your Dane spayed or neutered *prior* to sexual awareness; about six to nine months of age.

What if I still want to breed my Dane?

Before you consider breeding your Dane, we would ask you to give it careful consideration. Take some time to talk to long-term Dane breeders. Find out what is involved. Find out if your Dane is indeed breeding quality. Being a giant breed, Great Danes have special requirements. Raising a litter of Dane puppies properly is just plain, hard work. It is time consuming, expensive, heartbreaking and frustrating. Raising a litter *properly* is not a money making venture; in fact, you will be very lucky if you break even. Problems with breeding and whelping are not uncommon. Can you deal with an emergency C-section at 2:00 a.m. or with bottle feeding newborns every 2 hours? What if the litter gets sick? Are you going to be able to medicate and clean up after ill puppies? Do you have the facilities for a litter? Eight 9-week-old Dane puppies take up a lot of room and are very rowdy!

Can you be responsible for the puppies you produce? Will you place pets on spay/neuter agreements? Will you take dogs back if the purchaser cannot keep them? Can you send your puppy purchaser out into the world with adequate care, feeding, and training instructions?

Please, before you breed your Dane, think about it carefully.

- It should be determined that the Dane is of breeding quality prior to breeding; that the dog does not have any disqualifying faults or

structural problems; is mentally and physically sound and is a good example of the breed.

- Bitches ***should not*** be bred before two years of age.
- All breeding stock should be radiographed to determine they are free of hip dysplasia.
- All breeding stock should be health checked prior to breeding.
- Suggested pre-breeding health clearances include testing for Brucellosis, thyroid, eyes CERF'd, heart checked.
- AKC registration papers need to be in order prior to breeding.
- Should be a recognized color: fawn, brindle, black, blue, and Harlequin color family. Breeder should adhere to the proper breeding of color families.
- Breeder should have knowledge of proper puppy rearing techniques.
- Breeder should be responsible for the puppies he/she produces.

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