

Ovariohysterectomy in Dogs (Spaying)

General Information

Ovariohysterectomy is the medical term for spaying or neutering a female dog. The procedure consists of surgical removal of the ovaries and uterus. If the ovaries are not removed, the bothersome heat periods still occur even though the pregnancy is no longer possible. For the small to medium breeds, it is recommended to spay between 5-8 months of age. For the larger breed dogs, there are new thoughts that there are some health benefits to spay closer to one year of age. This would be done soon after their first heat cycle. This will be discussed on a case by case basis at your puppy visit.

Though it is routinely performed, ovariohysterectomy is major abdominal surgery requiring general anesthesia and sterile operating technique.

Prevention of pregnancy and heat periods is the main reason for the surgery, but the procedure is often necessary in treating severe uterine infections, ovarian and or uterine tumors, and some skin disorders.

What Are the Advantages?

- There will be no more heat periods.
- There will be no unwanted puppies.
- The uterine infections common in older dogs rarely occur.
- Mammary gland cancer seldom develops in dogs spayed before their first heat.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Will it make my dog fat and lazy?** - No. Obesity is caused by excessive calorie intake. Weight can be controlled by proper feeding and exercise.
2. **Will it change her personality, disposition or intelligence?** – No. Dogs' personalities do not fully develop until 1 to 2 years of age. If there is a personality change in a dog spayed at a young age, it would have occurred without surgery.
3. **Are there any problems associated with spaying?** – A very small percentage of dogs have trouble holding their urine as they become older. This is normally controllable with medication.
4. **Shouldn't my dog have a litter first?** – No. There is no advantage in allowing your dog to have a litter of puppies.

Important Considerations Before and After Surgery

- Your dog should be free of intestinal parasites (worms) and all vaccinations should be current before surgery.
- Restrict your dog's activity for 7 days after surgery.
- Your dog should wear Elizabethan Collar for the first 7-10 day after surgery
- Suture removal is not necessary.
- Your pet should behave normally within one or two days.

Notify the Doctor if Any of the Following Occur:

- Your dog removes a suture or otherwise irritates the incision.
- Your dog refuses to eat or seems depressed after the first day home.
- Your dog's general health changes.