



Ashland Animal Hospital

Progressive Compassionate Pet Care

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Ovariohysterectomy (Spaying) in Dogs

General Information

Ovariohysterectomy is the medical term for spaying 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 pregnancy is no longer possible. Surgery is usually performed at 5 ½ to 9 months of age, before the first heat period.

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.

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 ____ days after surgery.
- Suture removal is/is not necessary.
- Your dog will be evaluated for suture removal in ____ 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.