

Spay/Neuter

The proper technical term for the surgical alteration of an animal is “neutering”, regardless if it is male or female. The spay, or ovariectomy, is the surgery performed on female animals in which both ovaries and the complete uterus is removed. The castration, or orchidectomy, is the surgery performed on male animals. In this case, both testicles are removed. Most people, however, refer to “spay” for females and “neuter” for male animals, but we will be as technically correct as we can.

For female dogs and cats that are being spayed, a small incision (cut) is made in the middle of the belly, just below the belly button. It is through this small hole that the ovaries and uterus will be removed. The ovaries are clamped and the blood vessels tied with suture, and then the end of the uterus near the cervix is clamped and tied as well. The inside of the belly is checked carefully for bleeding and if everything looks fine, the muscle layer is sutured (sewed) first, followed by the fat layer then finally the top layer of skin. The sutures (stitches) on the inside are special dissolving material so they do not need to be removed, however we will need to remove the skin sutures in 10 days.

Female dogs generally spend the night in the hospital, so they can rest and will be more comfortable when they go home the next day. We usually discharge the female cats the evening of surgery, provided a responsible person will supervise them.

The procedure for male dogs and cats is a little different. Both testicles are removed through a single small incision and the blood vessels and the vas deferens (sperm cords) are tied with sutures. In dogs we close the inside incision with suture and put sutures in the skin as well. Cats usually do not need sutures in either the inside layer or the skin.

Male dogs and cats generally are discharged the evening after surgery, provided a responsible person will supervise them.

Your pet may require an Elizabethan collar (“lampshade”) so that it is not able to lick or chew at the sutures, preventing infection and additional surgery for your pet and cost to you.