

Spaying Your Dog

Why should I have my dog spayed?

This procedure (called ovariectomy) is recommended for several reasons. From a health standpoint, females that are not spayed run a higher risk of many diseases including ovarian cancer, mammary gland (breast) cancer, and pyometra (a life threatening infection of the uterus).

From a community and animal welfare standpoint, neutering eliminates the risk of unwanted puppies, and contributes to reducing unwanted pets and animal cruelty.

When should I have my dog spayed?

We recommend that most female dogs be spayed at 6 months of age so that they are mature enough to go under anesthesia safely, but young enough that they haven't experienced their first heat (spaying before the first heat dramatically reduces the risk of mammary cancer). There might be some exceptions to that, so please make sure to discuss the best timing for spaying your dog with your veterinarian. Dogs older than 6 months can still be spayed and there are definite health advantage to be spayed, even for an adult dog. It is very important that your dog is NOT in heat at the time of surgery.

How does it work?

The night before the surgery, remove her food at 9PM, but always leave water available to her. Bring your dog to the Hospital between 8:00 and 8:30 the day of the surgery. We will weigh her and then you will meet a veterinary technician who will do a physical exam, offer pre-operative testing and have you sign a consent form for the surgery. She can also answer any questions or concerns you may have. For the protection of your dog and every pet in the hospital, all patients must be up to date for vaccinations prior to surgery.

The operation

After the admission, we will give your dog a sedative so that she can be safely and comfortably handled. Once the sedative has taken effect, she will receive an intravenous anesthetic which will make her sleep deeply enough for us to put a breathing tube in her trachea (wind pipe). The tube delivers gas anesthetic and oxygen to the patient to keep her soundly asleep and well oxygenated during the procedure. The patient also receives a pain medication injection before the surgery begins, as well as IV fluids during the procedure.

Once she is asleep with the tube securing her airway, we put her on her back and shave and wash her abdomen. Afterward we bring her to the operating room, install the monitoring equipment and do a final disinfection of the abdomen skin while the surgeon is scrubbing and putting on a sterile surgical mask, gown and gloves. Before making the incision, the surgeon puts sterile drapes around the surgical site, so that only the disinfected skin is exposed.

The surgery itself will take approximately 30-60 minutes, depending on your dog's size. When the surgery is over, we stop the anesthetic gas flow, and monitor your dog closely until she wakes up enough to have the breathing tube removed, and she is able to swallow again. Then we bring her to a recovery cage. When all the surgeries of the day are complete, we will call you to give you an update on how the procedure went and set up an appointment for you to come pick her up the next day. When you come to pick her up, you will meet with a technician who will discuss the after care instructions with you.

After care

Your dog will leave with pain control medication to be administered at home. Pain control helps speed up healing, and keeps your dog comfortable. There shouldn't be any vigorous activity for at least 14 days after the surgery. Excessive activity increases the risk of post-surgical complications and can delay healing. Since the sutures are all under the skin and will dissolve with time, there is no need to have sutures removed. Check the incision every day for swelling or discharge, and call us if you have any concern.

If your dog licks her incision, it is very important that you come to the clinic to get her an Elizabethan collar to avoid her opening or infecting her incision.

