

Ovariohysterectomy or Spay Surgery

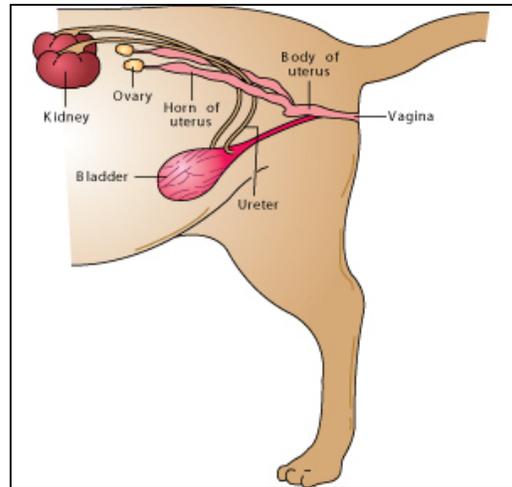
What is meant by ovariohysterectomy or spaying?

Spaying is the common term used to describe the surgical procedure known scientifically as an ovariohysterectomy. In this procedure, the ovaries and uterus are completely removed in order to sterilize a female dog or cat.

Why should I have my dog or cat spayed?

We recommend that all non-breeding cats and dogs be sterilized. Here are several health benefits associated with spaying your pet.

- Spaying eliminates the risk of ovarian and uterine cancers.
- Breast cancer is the number one type of cancer diagnosed in intact or unspayed female cats and dogs.
- Spaying eliminates the possibility of false pregnancy following the “heat cycle”
- Prevention of dangerous uterine infections known as pyometra
- If your cat or dog is spayed before her first heat cycle, there is less than ½ of 1% (0.5%) chance of developing breast cancer.
- With every subsequent heat cycle, the risk of developing breast cancer increases.
- After 2½ years of age ovariohysterectomy gives no protective benefit against developing breast cancer.
- Pets with diabetes or epilepsy should be spayed to prevent hormonal changes that may interfere with medications.
- It should be remembered that owners of Guide Dogs for the Blind, Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, Military Working Dogs, and Dogs for the Disabled routinely have their dogs spayed.



Are there other benefits to spaying my cat or dog?

The most obvious benefit is the prevention of unplanned pregnancies. There is no medical or scientific reason for letting your cat have a litter before she is spayed.

Once a cat reaches puberty, usually at around seven months of age, she will have a heat or estrus cycle every two to three weeks for most of the year, unless she becomes pregnant. She will be “in heat” or receptive to mating for approximately one week in each cycle. During “heat” she may display unsociable behavior such as loud and persistent crying and frequent

rubbing and rolling on the floor. This behavior coupled with her scent, will attract male cats from miles around. Removal of the ovaries will stop her estrus cycles.

Dogs reach sexual puberty at about 6-8 months and will begin cycling every 6 months thereafter.

Is spaying performed for any other reason?

The operation may be performed for several medical conditions. These include:

- Treatment of intractable false or phantom pregnancy
- Females with irregular or abnormal cycles due to ovarian cysts
- Spaying is also carried out on occasions to correct certain behavioral abnormalities
- Treatment of uterine infection (pyometra) or cancer

Dystocia (difficult birthing) or post caesarean-section surgery

When should I have my pet spayed?

Spaying should be performed before the first estrus or “heat cycle”. Most dogs and cats are spayed between four and six months of age although some veterinarians choose to spay earlier. It is possible to spay your dog or cat if she is pregnant.

What does a spay surgery involve?

This is a major surgical procedure that requires a full general anesthetic. You will need to fast your pet the night prior to surgery. Most pets return home the same afternoon of surgery.

The operation is performed through a relatively small incision made most commonly in the midline of the abdomen, just below the umbilicus. Both ovaries are removed along with the entire uterus. The surgical incision will be closed with several layers of sutures. In many cases, skin sutures will be placed, and these will be removed after 10-14 days.

Are complications common with spaying?

In general, complications are rare during spaying. However, as with all anesthetic and surgical procedures, there is always a small risk. The potential complications include:

Anesthetic reaction

It is possible that any individual animal could have an adverse reaction following the administration of a drug or anesthetic. Such cases are impossible to predict, but are extremely rare. Pre-operative blood work is a useful screening test that may detect pre-existing problems which could interfere with the pet’s ability to handle the anesthetic drugs.



It is important that you properly fast your pet prior to surgery according to your veterinarian’s instructions. In addition, any signs of illness or previous medical conditions should be reported to your veterinarian prior to any sedation, anesthesia or surgery.

Internal bleeding

This can occur if a ligature around a blood vessel breaks or slips off after the abdomen has been closed. This is very rare, and is more likely to occur if your pet is extremely active. Clinical signs include weakness, pale gums, depression, anorexia or a distended abdomen.

Post-operative infection

This may occur internally or externally around the incision site. In most cases the infection can be controlled with antibiotics. This most commonly occurs when your pet licks the site excessively or is in a damp environment.

Sinus formation or Suture Reaction

Although extremely rare, occasionally the body will react to certain types of suture material used during surgery. This results in a draining wound or tract that may appear up to several weeks after the surgery was performed. Often a further operation is required to remove the suture material.

Will spaying have any affect on my pet?

In the vast majority of cats and dogs, there are absolutely no adverse affects following spaying. In certain cats, notably the Siamese breed, the hair that grows back over an operation site may be noticeably darker, believed to be due to a difference in the skin temperature. This darker patch may grow out with the following molt as the hair is naturally replaced.

There are many myths and rumors that are not supported by facts or research especially involving behavior changes and obesity . Be sure to address any questions or concerns you may have with our staff prior to surgery.

ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS: