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## **OVARIOHYSTERECTOMY OF THE DOG (SPAY)**

Spaying of the female dog is the removal of her ovaries and uterus (ovariohysterectomy). The operation is done at our clinic Monday through Friday as an outpatient surgery. A great deal of care is used to maintain your pet's health during her stay at our hospital. All pets receive pre-operative blood tests and a physical exam prior to receiving any anesthesia. IV catheters are placed as an added safety precaution and for the administration of IV fluids prior to and during the procedure. All patients are monitored very carefully using the latest equipment, by well-trained staff and certified veterinary technicians. All are given pain relief medication before and after the procedure as well as being sent home with medication for their continued recovery at home.

### **BENEFITS OF SPAYING**

Spaying will prevent your dog from ever getting pregnant. We strongly encourage adoption from humane societies as millions of pets are needlessly destroyed each year from unwanted pregnancies. **THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO MEDICAL BENEFIT TO THE FEMALE DOG TO HAVE A LITTER OF PUPPIES.**

Spaying a dog prior to her first heat cycle prevents spotting of blood, which usually lasts 2-3 weeks. Spaying also virtually eliminates their chances of developing breast tumors. Approximately 50% of canine breast tumors are malignant. Uterine and ovarian cancers can also develop in dogs that haven't been spayed.

As intact female dogs get older, they can develop uterine infections. These can become serious, life-threatening illnesses. Treatment consists of performing an ovariohysterectomy (spay), but at a much higher risk to the patient.

Intact females can also develop a condition called "false" pregnancy where females will exhibit some of the same behaviors that a pregnant dog would. Some females will even develop milk in their mammary glands.

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Spaying does **NOT** cause a change in temperament or make your pet gain weight. However, since the operation is performed when the pet's growth has slowed down, we need to decrease the amount of calories she consumes and increase her exercise level.

### **THE BEST TIME FOR SPAYING**

We recommend spaying your pet between 6 and 8 months of age. Smaller breeds should wait until all of the permanent teeth are in (7-8 months) in case we need to extract any baby teeth that have not fallen out. If your dog starts to go into a heat cycle, we need to wait 8-10 weeks after it is over before spaying because she will have a prolonged bleeding time during her heat cycle and for a time afterwards. The risk of developing breast tumors goes up to 1 in 25 for those who have had 1 heat cycle. After the second heat cycle the risk increases to 1 in 4. The risk of breast cancer continues to increase with age, so it is best to spay your pet before her first heat cycle.

### **POSTOPERATIVE CARE**

Your dog should be confined in the house and should be restricted to a leash when outside for 7-10 days following the surgery. Your pet may be left home by itself during the days immediately following surgery as long as she's confined. Most dogs can resume normal activity including bathing after 10-14 days. Sutures are placed beneath the surface of the skin and will be absorbed over time.