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## SPAYING YOUR DOG

### *Why should I have my dog spayed?*

We recommend spaying all female pets. The benefits to your pet's health and to help reduce the pet overpopulation crisis make this decision easier. It should be remembered that owners of Guide Dogs for the Blind, Hearing Dogs for Deaf People and Dogs for the Disabled routinely have their dogs spayed.

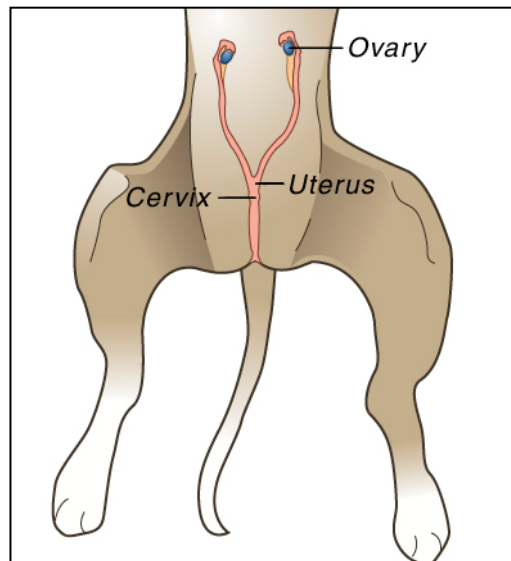
### *What are the advantages of spaying in the female dog?*

- Prevention of heat or estrus
- When in "heat", the female experiences an urge to escape in order to find a mate. This is eliminated.
- It eliminates the possibility of false pregnancy following the "heat cycle". With false pregnancy (pseudopregnancy) the dog will appear to be pregnant, including enlarging mammary glands with milk production. The dog will even have nesting behaviour appearing like she is going to have a litter.
- Prevention of uterine infection (pyometra)
- The prevention of breast cancer. Dogs spayed before their first "heat" have less than 0.5% chance of developing breast cancer. Mammary (breast) cancer is very common in people and non-spayed dogs are 5 times more likely than people to develop mammary cancer.
- Elimination of the risk of uterine and ovarian cancer

### *Is spaying performed for any other reason?*

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

- Treatment of intractable false or pseudopregnancy
- 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



### *What are the disadvantages?*

Most of the perceived disadvantages are false. The most quoted of these are that the dog will become fat, characterless, and useless as a guard-dog. Obesity is probably the most commonly quoted disadvantage of spaying. Obesity is the result of overfeeding. By regulating your dog's diet and caloric intake, you can prevent obesity in neutered or intact males.

Spaying doesn't cause a change in personality, guarding instincts, intelligence, playfulness or affection.

***When should the operation be performed?***

Most veterinarians recommend spaying between four and six months of age.

***Is there any alternative to surgery?***

Not at the present time, although there are several exciting advances being made in this area.

***Are there any dangers associated with the operation?***

Spaying is considered a major operation and requires general anesthesia. With today's modern anesthetics and monitoring equipment, the risk of a complication is very low. It has been said that your pet has a greater chance of being injured in a car wreck than having an anesthetic or surgical complication.

***What happens when I leave my dog for this procedure?***

You will need to withhold food for twelve (12) hours prior to surgery. Your pet should have free access to water during the pre-operative fasting period. Please bring her in at 8:00AM the morning of the procedure.



Your pet will be examined and pre-anesthetic blood tests are highly recommended to be sure the kidney and liver is functioning normally. If a problem is noticed, the anesthetic protocol can be adjusted or the procedure may be put on hold for other tests to be performed.

If everything is acceptable, your pet will then be anesthetized. Most pets will have an intravenous (IV) catheter placed to administer the anesthetic and to provide fluid therapy during the surgery. IV fluids are also highly recommended to make the procedure as safe as possible. Similar to humans having surgery, IV fluids help to maintain normal blood pressure during the procedure and allow an IV access to give emergency medications should emergency medications need to be given.

After your pet is anesthetized, a breathing tube will be placed in her trachea (windpipe). This will allow us to deliver oxygen and the gas anesthetic. The surgery consists of making a small incision just below the umbilicus and removing the ovaries and uterus. Absorbable sutures are placed to close the abdominal muscles and subcutaneous (fat) layer. Finally, skin sutures are then placed to close the incision, which will need to be removed in 10 days. We will then hospitalize your dog overnight as she recovers from the anesthetic and monitor the incision. She will then be free to go home the next day during the afternoon (usually between 4 to 6 PM). If you have any questions or concerns with her stay with us, do not hesitate to talk to us about it.

***Are there any post-operative precautions I should take?***

Rest and restriction of activity are the primary post-operative care you should provide. Most dogs can resume normal activity ten days after surgery. Please prevent any bathing, swimming, or running, and allow as much rest as possible until the sutures are out. If she licks the incision, or if the incision appears inflamed, please call us and we may need to place an Elizabethan Collar and/or prescribe some antibiotics.

***I am told that letting my dog have one litter will quiet her down.***

There is no scientific evidence that having puppies has any calming psychological effect.

***For more information, a detailed video of the procedure can also be seen in our website at [morgananimalhospital.com](http://morgananimalhospital.com)***