



Brookville Road Animal Hospital

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Home Care Instructions

- Restrict activity for 7 days. He/she should be inside during this time, and not allowed to run or play with other pets.
- An e-collar should be worn for 5-7 days if he/she tries to lick at the incision. This is strongly recommended when unsupervised, as this is very likely to happen.
- Monitor incision for swelling and discharge. Expect the area to be somewhat red for a few days. If excessive swelling or discharge is noted, please come in for recheck examination.
- No suture removal is required – all sutures are absorbable and under the skin.
- He/she can be offered her normal food tonight.

THE PET HEALTH LIBRARY

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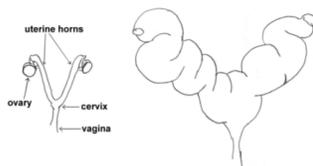
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Canine Spay FAQ

WHY FEMALE DOGS SHOULD BE SPAYED

Mammary Cancer Prevention

A female dog spayed before her first heat will have a near zero chance of developing mammary cancer. After the first heat, this incidence climbs to 7% and after the second heat the risk is 25% (one in four!). It is easy to see that an early spay can completely prevent what is frequently a very difficult and potentially fatal form of cancer.



Pyometra Prevention Normal Uterus Uterus with pyometra

Pyometra is the life-threatening infection of the uterus that generally occurs in middle-aged to older female dogs in the six weeks following heat. This is an extremely common disease of unspayed female dogs.

Simple Convenience

The female dog comes into heat every 8 months or so. There is a bloody vaginal discharge and local male dogs are attracted. Often there is an offensive odor.

All of this Disappears with Spaying.

Now That we Know Why it is a Good Idea to Spay, What Exactly Happens?

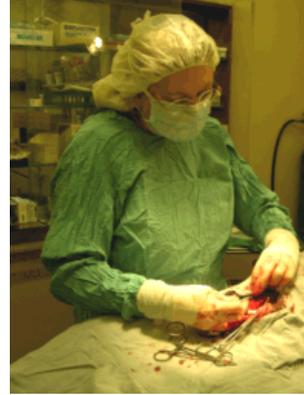
It is important that the patient has not been fed in at least 8 hours. Anesthetic medications commonly induce nausea and vomiting can be dangerous in a sedated patient (vomit can be inhaled/aspirated leading to pneumonia).

A preoperative evaluation is performed; blood work is recommended for older females and may be recommended as a normal preanesthetic consideration. An intravenous catheter may be placed to facilitate the administration of anesthetic drugs, for any fluid administration, and for use in case of emergency. This necessitates shaving a small patch of skin on one of the legs.

A tranquilizer or other pre-anesthetic medication may be administered to ease the induction of anesthesia.

A medication is given intravenously to induce sleep. This medication is called an induction agent and lasts only long enough to establish the maintenance of anesthesia by the inhalant anesthetic (gas). Once the dog is asleep, a tube is placed in her throat to ensure that a clear airway is maintained through out the procedure.

Sometimes a cough is noted for a couple of days after surgery. This may have been caused by the tube in the throat. Such coughs only last a couple of days; anything that persists longer should be re-evaluated.



The tube is hooked up to a machine that delivers a specific concentration of inhalant gas mixed in 100% oxygen. A technician is assigned to monitoring this pet so that the concentration of inhalant gas can be changed as needed and patient mucous membrane color, heart rate, respiration and other parameters are followed.

In the surgical prep area, the abdomen is shaved and scrubbed. The bladder is emptied and the patient is moved to a surgical suite, where she is draped with surgical cloths or papers to isolate the area where surgery will take place.

An incision is made on the midline of the abdomen, and the three points where the ovaries and uterus attaches are tied off and cut. The abdomen is checked for bleeding and two or three layers of stitches are placed to close the incision.

The anesthesia technician continues monitoring until the dog wakes up and coughs out the throat tube. The patient is kept in an observation room until she is able to walk.

What to Expect at Home

Most spay patients go home the next day as if nothing had happened, although some will need pain medication for a few days. Some nausea may occur in the first couple of days after surgery and it would not be unusual for the dog to refuse food for a day or two after surgery. As noted above, a cough may persist for a couple of days as a result of the throat tube. This should not persist longer than a couple of days.

Dogs who show a propensity to lick their stitches will need an Elizabethan or "E" collar to restrict access to the stitches. This is not very comfortable for the dog but it must be used strictly until the stitches are out and the incision is healed.



Activity should be restricted during the week following surgery. Excessive activity can lead to swelling or fluid accumulation under the incision. If a fluid pocket does form, it should resolve on its own after a few weeks. If a fluid pocket forms and drains liquid from the incision, the dog should be re-checked with the veterinarian.

What about Behavioral Changes?

The female dog's reproductive tract is dormant for most of the year. It only activates for the three-week period of heat. This means that from a behavioral stand point, the female dog acts spayed most of the time. This said, there has been a documented slowing of metabolism after spays and it may be necessary to use a reduced calorie food in an adult dog. Check with your veterinarian about nutritional recommendations.

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