

Spaying Your Dog

Why should I have my dog spayed?

- Prevention of heat or estrus
- When in “heat,” the female experiences an urge to escape in order to find a mate. Females also have a discharge that some owners find disturbing. Both of these will be eliminated.
- It eliminates the possibility of false pregnancy following the “heat” cycle.
- The prevention of breast cancer. Dogs spayed before the first “heat” have less than 0.5% chance of developing breast cancer.
- Elimination of the risk of uterine and ovarian cancer.

What are the disadvantages?

Most of the perceived disadvantages are false. The most quoted of these are that the dog will become fat, characterless. Obesity is probably the most commonly quoted disadvantage of spaying. Obesity is the result of overfeeding. By regulating your dog’s diet, calorie intake, and exercise, you can prevent obesity in neutered or intact females.

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

When should the operation be performed?

Research reveals that spaying a pet at an early stage does not cause any increased risk. We recommend spaying around six months of age, before the first “heat.” The ovaries and uterus remain relatively undeveloped and small at this stage, making the surgery easier and creating less risk for the patient. It is possible to spay a dog at any age, but the degree of surgical difficulty increases with each successive “heat” cycle.

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.

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?

Your pet will be examined and pre-anesthetic blood tests are usually performed. If everything is acceptable your pet will then be anesthetized. Most pets will have an intravenous catheter placed to administer the anesthetic and to provide fluid therapy during the surgery. After your pet is anesthetized a breathing tube will be placed in his 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.

Are there any post-operative precautions I should take?

Medication will be dispensed on discharge to relieve your pet of any discomfort after surgery. Rest and restriction of activity are the primary post-operative care you should provide. Most dogs can resume normal activity five to ten days after surgery. Until then, leash walks no running or jumping and lots of rest is the rule. Medication will be dispensed on discharge to relieve any post-surgical discomfort your pet may have.

To answer any question, please call Bridletowne Warden Animal Hospital at 416-491-8706.