



Memorial-610 Hospital for Animals

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Ovariohysterectomy in Dogs

General Information

Ovariohysterectomy is the medical term for spaying or neutering a female dog. The procedure consists of surgical removal of the ovaries and uterus. If the ovaries are not removed, the bothersome heat periods still occur, even though pregnancy is impossible. Surgery is usually performed at 4 ½ to 9 months of age.

Though it is routinely performed, ovariohysterectomy is major abdominal surgery requiring general anesthesia and sterile operating technique.

Prevention of pregnancy and heat periods is the main reason for the surgery, but the procedure is often necessary in treating severe uterine infections, ovarian and/or uterine tumors, and some skin disorders.

What are the Advantages?

- There will be no more heat periods.
- There will be no unwanted puppies.
- Serious uterine infections are eliminated.
- Mammary gland cancer seldom develops in dogs spayed before the first heat cycle. A dog spayed after two or more heat cycles has a 26% chance of mammary cancer, after one cycle 8%, before the first cycle 0.5%.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Will it make my dog fat and lazy? No. Obesity is due to excessive calorie intake relative to the dog's activity level. Weight may be controlled through proper feeding and exercise.
2. Will it change her personality, disposition or intelligence? No. Dogs' personalities do not fully develop until 1-2 years of age. If there is a personality change in a dog neutered at a young age, it would have occurred without surgery.
3. Are there any problems associated with spaying? A very small percentage of dogs have trouble holding their urine as they become older. This is normally controllable with medication.
4. Shouldn't my dog have a litter first? No. There is no advantage in allowing your dog to have a litter of puppies. In fact, each heat cycle that the dog goes through will make mammary tumors more of a possibility later in life.