



WHY SHOULD I SPAY MY DOG?

One of the strongest arguments for **spaying** is to help control overpopulation. In today's world, the cost of veterinary services, coupled with a lack of caregiver time and effort, has caused the pet population to grow out of control. Shelters are filled to capacity, rescues are filling to capacity, and now animals are being dispersed on social media and local sale sites.

To maintain the health of the animal community, reduce individual household expense, reduce the burden on the shelter and rescue system, and reduce the number of wandering stray animals, **spaying** needs to regain footing as a minimum standard of care.

Not only from a population control standpoint, **spaying** is known to prevent several serious health conditions. Mammary cancer prevention (seen more in canine patients) and uterine infection (pyometra) prevention are the top two medical reasons to **spay**. Please see the [Pyometra](#) document for additional information.

If a female dog is **spayed** before her first heat cycle it has been shown that there is a negligible chance of developing mammary cancer. However, after the first heat cycle, this incidence climbs to 7 percent, and after the second heat cycle the risk is 25 percent.

WHAT BEHAVIORAL CHANGES CAN I EXPECT AFTER SPAYING?

Canine patients' reproductive systems remain dormant most of the year, typically only coming into heat two times per year. For the most part, many female canine patients act **spayed** most of the year. Typically, the only change noted post-**spay** is a potential for slower metabolism and weight gain. Although this can be mitigated with a reduced calorie diet.

Feline patients' reproductive systems remain dormant until there is increased light cycles (seasonally). Most cats become very vocal with their heat cycles, which is a nuisance for most indoor feline caregivers. Behaviorally, caregivers find an alleviation of this nuisance behavior after they are **spayed**.

WHAT EXACTLY IS DONE SURGICALLY?

As a simple outpatient procedure, the uterus and both ovaries are removed surgically through an abdominal incision.

In late-in-life patients, mammary masses (if present) are also removed at the time of **spaying**.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT UPON DISCHARGE FROM THE HOSPITAL?

You will need to reduce the patient's activity for 7-10 days after **spaying**.

You will need to make sure the patient has an e-collar at all times to prevent licking and self-trauma of surgical site.

There should be little to no complications with the abdominal incision. If there is concern, or there is noticeable swelling or discharge, have the patient rechecked.