

Spaying Your Pet

What Is Spaying?

Spaying, technically called **ovariohysterectomy**, is the removal of a female's ovaries and uterus. Without removing the ovaries, the female will continue to have heat cycles.

What are the advantages of spaying my pet?

1. **Preventing pet over-population:** Every year, more than 10 million dogs and cats must be put to death in this country because no one wants them. It is estimated that in seven years, one female and her offspring can produce 42,000 kittens. It takes time, money and effort to raise a litter of puppies or kittens and then find good homes for them. Just because your pet is a purebred, don't assume its offspring won't end up in a shelter or be abandoned. It happens quite regularly.
2. **Preventing mammary tumors:** Spaying females before their first estrous (heat) cycle reduces her risk of developing mammary tumors dramatically. There is less than 0.5% incidence of mammary tumors in female dogs that are spayed before their first heat cycle. Females spayed after one estrous cycle have 8.0% of the risk, and those spayed after two estrous cycles have 26.0% of the risk of developing mammary neoplasia later in life. Overall, unspayed bitches have a seven times greater risk of developing mammary neoplasia than do those that are spayed. While the benefit of spaying decreases with each estrous cycle, there are still some benefits that have been demonstrated in bitches even up to 9 years of age. There is greater benefits to spay early. Greater than 50% of the time, the mammary masses will be malignant. Unspayed cats run a seven-times greater risk than spayed cats for developing mammary tumors. In cats, 80% of the tumors will be malignant.
3. **Preventing uterine infections:** Pyometra, Infection of the uterus, is due to hormonally induced changes that occur during the estrous cycle that allow secondary infections to occur. The uterus fills with bacteria, pus and toxins. A severe case can lead to sepsis, which can result in shock. Spaying the pet is the treatment of choice.

Medical management should only be used in stable animals whose breeding potential is of utmost importance.

What are the disadvantages of spaying my pet?

Your pet will be permanently unable to reproduce.

It is in your pet's best medical interest to be spayed at an early age. Our recommendation is that, unless your pet is part of a carefully planned breeding program or a show animal, it should be spayed. We welcome any questions about the surgery. Please feel free to discuss the procedure with our veterinarians or any of our staff members.