



Spay and Neuter

Spaying females and neutering males are very common procedures in veterinary medicine. These procedures prevent unwanted pregnancy, uterine or ovarian cancer, testicular cancer, prostate infections or enlargement, uterine or testicular torsion or prolapse, and can decrease the risk of mammary and other cancers. In smaller breed dogs, these procedures are typically recommended at 6 months of age. In larger breed dogs, these are recommended at 12 months of age. This difference is due to evidence of decreased bone cancers and some other joint diseases that more commonly occur in large breed dogs.

Spay and Neuter Procedure

A spay, or ovariectomy, is the removal of a female's ovaries. In some instances, an ovariohysterectomy may be performed, in which the uterus is also removed. Once your pet is placed under general anesthesia, an incision will be made into the abdomen. The ovaries will be located and removed by tying off the vessels that supply them. The abdomen will then be closed.

A neuter, or orchiectomy, is the removal of a male's testicles. This is much less invasive than the female spay, as the testicles are present outside of the abdomen. A small incision will be made in front of the scrotum and the testicles will be removed by tying off the vessels that supply them. The small skin incision will then be closed.

Complications

For a spay, the most common complication is minor swelling, irritation or opening of the skin incision. This occurs most often when your pet is not prevented for moving/running or licking the incision. Bleeding during the procedure may occur, especially if your pet is in or near heat. Rarely, a suture tying off the vessels that supplied the ovary can slip and your pet may have more life-threatening bleeding. Another uncommon complication could be excessive bleeding due to an underlying bleeding disorder. While this is uncommon, it is sometimes discovered at this time as this is typically the first surgery your pet is undergoing.

For a neuter, the most common complication is minor swelling, irritation or opening of the skin incision. This occurs most often when your pet is not prevented for moving/running or licking the incision. Swelling may also occur in the now empty scrotum. This typically does not cause pain or complications, but can look significant. Rarely, a slipped suture tying off vessels or uncovering of a bleeding disorder may occur, as noted above.

Infection is an uncommon, but possible complication of any incision site. If you notice discharge, excess redness, or heat around your pet's incision, please contact us immediately.

Recovery and Homecare

After your pet's spay or neuter, they will need to be confined in the home or crate and taken out on a leash for bathroom breaks only for 2 weeks to allow the incision and the ovarian/testicle removal areas to heal. Your pet will also require a cone during that time to prevent licking and self-trauma to the incision site. You can also ice the incision area twice daily for 10 minutes for the first 48 hours after surgery to decrease swelling. After 48 hours, a warm compress can be applied to the areas twice daily for 10 minutes to remove any swelling that occurred. This is especially helpful for swelling in the scrotum.

YOUR BEST FRIEND'S BEST FRIEND!