

WHAT IS MEANT BY OVARIOHYSTERECTOMY OR SPAYING?

Spaying is the common term used to describe the surgical procedure known scientifically as an ovariectomy. In this procedure, the ovaries and uterus are completely removed in order to sterilize a female cat.

WHY SHOULD I HAVE MY CAT SPAYED?

We recommend that all non-breeding cats be sterilized. Here are several health benefits associated with spaying your cat:

- Spaying eliminates the risk of ovarian and uterine cancers.
- Breast cancer is the number one type of cancer diagnosed in intact or un-spayed female cats.
- If your cat is spayed before her first heat cycle, there is less than 0.5% chance of developing breast cancer.
- With every subsequent heat cycle, the risk of developing breast cancer increases.
- After 2½ years of age, spaying your cat gives no protective benefit against developing breast cancer.
- Pets with diabetes or epilepsy should be spayed to prevent hormonal changes that may interfere with medications.

WHEN SHOULD I HAVE MY CAT SPAYED?

Spaying should be performed before the first estrus or “heat cycle”. Most cats are spayed at around six months of age.

ARE THERE OTHER BENEFITS TO SPAYING MY CAT?

The most obvious benefit is the prevention of unplanned pregnancies. There is no medical or scientific reason for letting your cat have a litter before she is spayed.

Once a cat reaches puberty, usually at around seven months of age, she will have a heat or estrus cycle every two to three weeks for most of the year, unless she becomes pregnant. She will be “in heat” or receptive to mating for approximately one week in each cycle. During “heat” she may display unsociable behavior such as loud and persistent crying and frequent rubbing and rolling on the floor. This behavior coupled with her scent, will attract male cats from miles around. Removal of the ovaries will stop her estrus cycles.

WILL SPAYING HAVE ANY AFFECT ON MY CAT?

In the vast majority of cats, there are absolutely no adverse affects following spaying. In certain cats, notably the Siamese breed, the hair that grows back over an operation site may be noticeably darker, believed to be due to a difference in the skin temperature. This darker patch may grow out with the following molt as the hair is naturally replaced.

There are many myths and rumors that are not supported by facts or research. Be sure to address any questions or concerns you may have with your veterinarian prior to surgery.

Spaying Your Cat

WHAT DOES A SPAY SURGERY INVOLVE?

We recommend taking your cat in to the clinic for pre-anesthetic bloodwork a week prior to surgery. This bloodwork is very important as it can detect any abnormalities, most importantly in the liver and kidneys, which are the organs mostly responsible for metabolizing and eliminating the anesthetic drugs. Should an abnormality be detected in the bloodwork, we will alter our anesthetic protocol to be safe for your pet, or in some cases surgery may need to be postponed until the abnormality is resolved to ensure your pet's well-being. Furthermore, you will be sent home with Gabapentin – a medication that is part of our anesthetic protocol and is at no charge to you. The reason we dispense this is because it helps make patients more comfortable when being left at the clinic for their surgical procedure. It allows us to decrease the anesthesia given for surgery as the more calm a patient is, the more effective the anesthesia will be. It also helps patients during recovery as it decreases stress and anxiety when waking up.

On the day of surgery, a veterinarian will examine your pet. If everything is acceptable, your pet will then be anesthetized. Your cat 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 their trachea or "windpipe". This will deliver oxygen and the gas anesthetic directly into the lungs.

The operation is performed through a relatively small incision made most commonly in the midline of the abdomen, just below the umbilicus. Both ovaries are removed along with the entire uterus. The surgical incision will be closed with several layers of sutures. For more information, contact your veterinarian.

