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Spaying Your Cat or Dog

What is a spay? What does the surgery involve?

Spaying your pet is the surgical removal of the reproductive organs. In females, these are the ovaries and uterus, and the procedure is called an ovariectomy, or spay. The best age for spaying is at 6 months of age. For large breed puppies, it is best to to 8 – 12 months of age. Spaying is considered a routine operation in which the animal is under general anesthesia and consists of a small incision in the abdomen to remove the ovaries and uterus. Most cats and dogs can go home the day of surgery and are back to normal within 7 to 10 days.

What are the advantages of spaying

Spayed animals do not go through heat cycles or produce unwanted puppies or kittens. Cats and dogs have their first heat at 5 to 12 months of age. In dogs, heat cycles occur approximately every six months. The external genitals swell, a bloody discharge occurs, and females attract males. Heat cycles generally last from 21 to 30 days and can be inconvenient. In cats, heat cycles can start at any time after sexual maturity, but most often occur in the spring and fall. Cats in heat do not usually have swelling or discharge, but they do attract tomcats. They exhibit unusually affectionate rubbing behavior, stretch and extend the back in a reverse arch, and meow loudly and continuously. This behavior may continue for days at a time over a period of weeks if mating does not take place.

Spayed animals no longer feel the need to roam to look for a mate.

Dogs and cats spayed before their first heat (six months of age) are virtually assured of not developing mammary cancer, which is a relatively common disease in intact females.

Spayed pets cannot develop the uterine infection called "pyometra," which usually occurs after a heat cycle in older, unspayed dogs and cats. Pyometra is a life threatening condition, which requires **emergency surgery** to remove the pus filled uterus.

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Neutering Your Cat or Dog

What is neutering? What does it involve?

Neutering is a routine surgical procedure of removing your pet's testicles, which is performed under general anesthesia. In dogs an incision is made in front of the scrotum, and then the testicles are removed through that incision that is then sutured closed. In cats the incision is made in the scrotum, testicles are removed and then the incision remains open. The best age for neutering is at 6 months of age. For large breed puppies, it is best to to 8 – 12 months of age. If your pet's testicles don't descend, you still need to have him neutered. These animals can still produce offspring and are more prone to hormone related health issues. Most cats and dogs can go home the day of the surgery and are back to normal with in 5-7 days.

What are the advantages of neutering?

- Unable to produce offspring.
- He's **less likely to get certain diseases**, such as testicular cancer and most prostate diseases.
- He'll **mark less**, inside and out, since he has less incentive to announce his presence.
- The lower level of testosterone can **improve if not eliminate roaming, aggression, humping**, and other dominance-related behaviors.

FYI

Fixing (in both males and females) does decrease your pet's metabolic energy requirements by 30% in 48hrs. In order to keep them in good body condition you may have to adjust the feeding quantities and get ready to switch them from a puppy/kitten food to an adult.

It is NOT true that a cat or dog should have one litter before being fixed. It does not help to calm them down or make them more social.

Fixing will NOT change your pet's personality. Pets are not completely socially developed until 1-2 years of age.

If you do have a large breed puppy, contact our clinic to discuss with a veterinarian the best time to spay or neuter.