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Ovariohysterectomy (Spaying) in Dogs

General Information

Ovariohysterectomy is the medical term for spaying a female dog. The procedure consists of surgical removal of the ovaries and uterus. If the ovaries are not removed, the bothersome heat periods still occur even though pregnancy is no longer possible. Surgery is usually performed at 4 - 8 months of age, before the first heat period.

Although it is routinely performed, ovariohysterectomy is major abdominal surgery requiring general anesthesia and sterile operating technique.

Prevention of pregnancy and heat periods is the main reason for the surgery, but the procedure is also used to treat severe uterine infections, ovarian and uterine cancer, and some skin disorders.

What Are the Advantages?

- There will be no more heat periods.
- There will be no unwanted puppies.
- The uterine infections common to older dogs rarely occur.
- There is less chance of mammary gland cancer and rarely develops in dogs spayed before their first heat.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. *Will it make my dog fat and lazy?* No. Obesity is caused by excessive calorie intake. Weight can be controlled with proper feeding and exercise.
2. *Will it change her disposition, personality, or intelligence?* dogs' personalities do not fully develop until 1 to 2 years of age. If there is a personality change after spaying at an early age, it would have occurred without surgery.
3. *Are there any problems associated with spaying?* A very small percentage of dogs have trouble holding their urine as they become older. This is normally controllable with medication.
4. *Shouldn't my dog have a litter first?* No. There is no advantage in allowing your dog to have a litter of puppies.

Important Considerations Before Surgery

- All vaccinations should be current before surgery.
- Your dog should be free of intestinal parasites (worms).
- Do not feed your dog for approximately 15 hours before admittance for surgery. (No food after 6 PM the night before- water is O.K.)
- Some care and recovery time is required after surgery.