

Why We Recommend Spaying Your Dog

What is a “Spay”?

Sterilization of the female dog is commonly performed surgically via the “spay”, a procedure in which both the ovaries and uterus are removed. The procedure is safe and effective, involving only an over-night stay at the hospital. Stitches are removed at a follow-up check up about 10 days after surgery. The procedure is a simple one, but the benefits are many.

Avoiding The Risks of Cancer

Dogs who are not spayed run the risk of uterine, ovarian and mammary cancers. Spaying eliminates the possibility of uterine and ovarian cancer, as the uterus and ovaries are removed in the spaying process. The chances of developing mammary cancer are diminished to almost zero if a dog is spayed before her first heat cycle. Even dogs that are spayed after the first heat have a lower incidence of mammary cancer. Because the hormones produced by the ovaries (estrogen) are responsible for stimulating the growth of many mammary tumors, spaying can even help retard the spread of already existing tumors.

Preventing Serious Illness

Middle-aged and older female dogs run the risk of a life-threatening disease called “pyometra”. This is an infection of the uterus that develops from repeated heat cycles. During the heat cycle, it is easy for bacteria in the vagina to ascend to the uterus and cause infection. The uterus with pyometra swells dramatically and is filled with pus, bacteria, dying tissue and toxins. Untreated, the disease is fatal. The only treatment for pyometra is spaying. Spaying early in the dog’s life will prevent the possibility of contracting pyometra.

Will “Spaying” Change My Dog’s Behavior?

The answer to this question is both yes and no. The female dog’s reproductive tract is dormant most of the year. It only activates for the three- week period of heat. This means from a behavioral stand- point, the female dog acts “spayed” most of the time. However, the desire to run away from home and search out male dogs will be eliminated, as well as the associated possibilities of illness, injury and unwanted puppies. Many people also believe that a spayed dog will become fat and lethargic. This is untrue. Only overeating and a lack of exercise will make a dog gain weight.

Too Many Puppies!

Although a life-long relationship with a dog is very rewarding, there are just too many dogs that are neglected and homeless. Every year, humane societies are forced to destroy thousands of unwanted dogs. Each year, in Detroit alone, the Humane Society takes in some 45,000 dogs and is only able to place approximately 9,000 of them in responsible homes. By not spaying your dog, you are adding to the community’s burden of providing for our local dog population.

For all of these reasons, Patterson Dog and Cat Hospital hope that you will make the decision to spay your dog.