



## Ovariohysterectomy

### Indications

Sterilization  
Ovarian disease  
Uterine disease  
Behavioral problems  
Vaginal hyperplasia  
Diabetes  
Epilepsy  
Mammary tumor prevention

### Nutritional Plan

Postsurgically, nutrition adequate for tissue repair

## Ovariohysterectomy

Ovariohysterectomy, commonly known as “spaying”, is the removal of the uterus and ovaries. Spaying stops the behavior associated with heat periods and prevents diseases – including cancer, trauma, and infections – of the ovaries, uterus, and mammary glands. This client education sheet will help you learn more about ovariohysterectomy and will review your veterinarian’s instructions for your pet’s care at home, as well as follow-up with the veterinary health care team.

### What You Should Know About Ovariohysterectomy

Pet overpopulation is a tremendous problem in the United States. According to the American Humane Association, between 6 and 10 million dogs and 6 and 10 million cats are put to sleep in its shelters each year. Thousands more are put to sleep by veterinarians, and perhaps millions more abandoned pets die in the wild from exposure and starvation. Ovariohysterectomy (spaying) is a responsible means of reducing this incredible loss of our companion animals.

Spaying eliminates heat periods, objectionable behavior, including spotting of blood in dogs, and the attraction of male animals. It also prevents unwanted litters of puppies and kittens. There is no evidence whatsoever that allowing a dog or cat to have a litter of puppies or kittens makes it a better pet.

Cancer of the mammary glands is the most common tumor in intact (non-spayed) dogs and the third most common tumor in cats. A pet spayed before its first heat cycle is seven times less likely to develop mammary gland cancer than is an intact pet. Spaying also removes the possibility of cancer of the uterus and ovaries, infections of the uterus, and disorders of pregnancy and birth. Spaying is often recommended as part of the treatment for pets with mammary cancer, diabetes, epilepsy, and diseases of the uterus and ovaries.

## Preparation

Spaying is a routine procedure because it is performed so frequently. Nevertheless, it is major abdominal surgery and requires general anesthesia. General anesthetics are best given when a pet has an empty stomach. Follow your veterinarian's instructions carefully for withholding food and water the evening before surgery.

Before surgery your pet will be given a physical examination. Your veterinarian may offer a routine blood test to identify risks that may complicate anesthesia and surgery, particularly if your pet is older or has any history of disease.

## Home Care

Recovery from ovariohysterectomy is usually uneventful. However, complications may arise if your pet chews or licks the incision excessively or exercises too vigorously. Dogs should be exercised on a leash for the first week after surgery. Check your pet's incision at least once a day. If the incision is red and swollen, oozes blood, or begins to separate, call your veterinarian. You should also call if your pet constantly licks or chews its incision, seems depressed, or won't eat. Skin sutures may need to be removed by your veterinarian.

## Nutritional Plan

After an ovariohysterectomy your veterinarian may suggest a dietary change based on your pet's age and body condition, and on the presence or absence of disease in other organs and body systems. Optimal nutrition for middle-aged and older pets provides for the pet's needs, but more importantly, reduces the health risks associated with feeding excess sodium, phosphorus, protein, and calories. Foods that avoid these harmful excesses and provide proper nutrition include Hill's® Science Diet® Adult as well as Hill's® Science Diet® Light Adult for dogs and cats.

## Transitioning Food

Unless recommended otherwise by your veterinarian, gradually introduce any new food over a seven-day period. Mix the new food with your pet's former food, gradually increasing its proportion until only the new food is fed.

If your pet is one of the few that doesn't readily accept a new food, try warming the canned food to body temperature, hand feeding for the first few days, or mixing the dry food with warm water (wait ten minutes before serving). However, do not add water to your cat's food. Feed only the recommended food. Do not feed additional salt or any snacks that may contain sodium. Be patient but firm with your pet. This is important because the success or failure of treatment depends to a large degree on strict adherence to the new food.

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## Home Care Instructions

Client's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Patient's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Medication(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Nutritional Recommendation: \_\_\_\_\_

Follow-Up Appointment: \_\_\_\_\_

(Hospital Stamp Area Above)

REGULAR VISITS WILL HELP OUR VETERINARY HEALTH CARE TEAM PROVIDE FOR YOUR PET'S BEST INTEREST.