

## Dog Surgery A-Z

### Why Should I Spay My Puppy?

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[Vaccinations](#), [deworming](#) and spaying a new puppy are all strong recommendations you may hear from your [veterinarian](#). You may then be asking yourself why you should spay your puppy.

#### Definition of "spay"

Spaying a puppy means removing the ovaries only (ovariectomy) or removing the ovaries and the uterus (ovario-hysterectomy). Most U.S. veterinarians perform an ovario-hysterectomy. Spaying a puppy, as long as certain precautions are taken under [anesthesia](#), is considered safer than spaying an adult because puppies tend to recover quicker. Most veterinarians recommend spaying puppies before 6 months of [age](#).

#### Spaying to prevent more puppies

Spaying will prevent bringing more puppies into the world. Breeding a dog is a big responsibility that should not be taken lightly. Breeders should be knowledgeable about genetics, [breed](#) standards and how to handle a [pregnancy](#). Some dogs can have a litter of 8, 12 or even 14 pups! Are you prepared for that amount of dedication?

Puppies can be a lot of work, and cost a lot of money. Extra veterinary care during pregnancy and for the puppies themselves should be expected. Also be prepared for possible complications that may require a C-section. Although it may seem costly to have your dog spayed, it will be far less costly than an emergency C-section.

#### Spaying to prevent pyometra

Not spaying a puppy can lead to pyometra later in life, i.e., an infection of the uterus which causes it to fill up with pus. Murphy's Law says that a pyometra is more likely to happen after hours—on an [emergency](#) basis, because early signs can be vague until your dog becomes very sick. Once again, it is much less expensive to spay your puppy than it is to take a chance with emergency surgery for pyometra. In addition, pyometra can cause serious [kidney disease](#) or could even be deadly.

#### Spaying to prevent mammary tumors

Not spaying a puppy before the first heat cycle increases the risk of mammary or breast [tumors](#). The more heat cycles a dog goes through, the higher the risk. Half of these tumors are benign, while the other half are malignant, i.e. cancerous. Either way, mammary tumors require surgery which could be costly and is always invasive. Again, preventing the problem is much easier and cheaper than treating it.

#### Spaying to prevent roaming

Intact females may be more likely to wander around, get pregnant by a complete stranger, [get hit by a car](#) or get in other types of trouble such as a dog fight or even [getting lost](#).

#### Spaying to prevent genetic diseases

Unless your dog is a perfect representative of the breed, there is a possibility of spreading genetic conditions such as [hip dysplasia](#), cardiac diseases, orthopedic and skin conditions. Inbreeding has led to a lot of suffering in our canine patients, and it means that the guardians may incur additional veterinary expenses trying to fix the problem.

#### Spaying to prevent heat cycles

Living through a heat cycle is not always the most fun. Female dogs bleed during their heat cycles, and you need to be prepared for the consequences, especially if you have plush white carpet...

#### Spaying to prevent false pregnancy

[False pregnancy, a.k.a. pseudo-pregnancy](#), is a strange condition that can occur in unspayed, female dogs. They seem to be pregnant, and act like it, but they don't have puppies at all! The reason for this strange and stressful behavior may be a hormonal imbalance, and therefore the definitive treatment is to spay the dog, i.e., remove the source of hormones: the ovaries.

For your puppy's safety and health, please spay her, and be sure to do it before the first heat cycle. Think of it as a small investment that will pay dividends for the rest of her life.

#### Questions to ask your veterinarian:

- When is the best time to spay my puppy?
- What precautions are taken during anesthesia?
- What is the postop care at home?

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*If you have any questions or concerns, you should always visit or call your veterinarian -- they are your best resource to ensure the health and well-being of your pets.*