

## Facts and Myths About Spaying

**Myth:** *Dogs are supposed to have one litter; it's good for them.*

**Fact:** Going through just one heat cycle increases the risk of mammary cancer by 10%. Other diseases, including uterine cancer and infection, also are more likely in dogs which have undergone just a single heat.

**Myth:** *Letting my dog have puppies is a good way for my family to witness the "miracle of life."*

**Fact:** If everything goes perfectly, a litter of puppies can be great fun. But if things don't go according to plan, you may be suddenly faced with a very expensive procedure to save your family's beloved pet's life. Losing a beloved pet isn't worth the risk. And besides, what happens if you cannot adopt out or sell the puppies? Do you want your family to have to abandon them in a shelter?

Your dog's surgery appointment is scheduled for:

Please have her here by 8 AM on that date. She can have as much water as she wants, but no food after 8 PM the night before.

We recommend keeping your dog here overnight after surgery to ensure she is quiet during the immediate 24 hours after surgery. This period is most crucial to the healing of her incision. She will be able to go home the afternoon of the surgery.

## Two Harbors Veterinary Clinic Cost and Policies for Spaying

### Dog Spay

less than 12 mos.	\$202.63
older than 12 mos., 25 lbs. or less	\$202.63
25-50 lbs.	\$225.89
50 lbs. or more	\$245.75

All expenses are expected to be paid in full at the time of discharge.

### Explanation of Costs

The charges for the surgery include a discount ranging somewhere between \$100 to \$170. This is taken off the cost of our surgical charges as our donation to helping prevent the pet overpopulation problem. Normal surgical time charges are around \$3 per minute; nearly 100% of these charges are discounted.

Our clinic makes mandatory an intravenous catheter and delivery of IV fluids during gas anesthesia. We do this because it significantly decreases the risk of problems with anesthesia as well as gives us a route to deliver emergency medications should problems develop.

We aggressively use pain control on our spays. Each dog receives a pre-operative anti-inflammatory injection that will help her be more comfortable in the 24 hours after surgery. We also give a morphine injection to keep the dog comfortable when she awakens. All of our spays go home with several days of post-operative oral pain control medication as well.

We invite you to compare our charges to other clinics, but when you do so, make sure to ask if they provide the same level of anesthetic management and post-operative care. We feel that we do the most we can to keep your dog safe and comfortable.

Two Harbors  
Veterinary Clinic



## Spaying Your Dog



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There is a fair amount of confusion about the merits and drawbacks to spaying a female dog. However, it will be one of the most important decisions you'll ever make for your pet. Because of this, we at Two Harbors Veterinary Clinic hope you'll take this information into account.

### SHOULD MY DOG BE SPAYED?

The only time your pet should not be spayed is if you absolutely know you are going to breed it. Millions of animals are euthanized year after year simply because there is no home for them. They sit for months in shelters hoping for a chance at life, and unfortunately there aren't enough people like you out there that are willing to take them home.

Breeding your dog should only be done if you are truly serious about raising puppies. This is a time-consuming and expensive endeavor. If the bitch experiences difficulties during whelping, a C-section can cost hundreds of dollars. If you are thinking about breeding your female dog, you need to ask yourself three questions:

- 1 Will the puppies be more valuable to me than the mother?
- 2 Am I prepared to spend as much as \$1000 if my dog experiences difficulties when giving birth?
- 3 Am I willing to raise the pups if something happens to their mother, or if she refuses to do so herself?

If the answer to any of these questions is "no" then you should have your female dog spayed, plain and simple.

There is no downside to spaying a

dog. Consider the following benefits to sterilization:

- **Behavior Modification:** A female dog in heat can be a lot of work. You have to keep your eye on them constantly, because they are always looking for an opportunity to escape and meet males. The occurrence of separation anxiety and wandering behaviors is also decreased if females are spayed prior to their first heat.
- **Cleanliness:** A female dog in heat will drip small amounts of blood from her vulva. This can cause headaches for people with carpeting.
- **Health Reasons:** There are two excellent health-related reasons to spay your dog. The first is to prevent a pyometra, a life-threatening condition where the uterus becomes infected. Older dogs that have undergone many heat cycles are at risk for this disease. Whereas spaying a healthy dog usually runs around \$160, a dog with pyometra must be spayed as an emergency, and the dog often becomes so ill that several days worth of hospitalization is necessary. The bill for a pyometra can often run as high as \$700-800. The second reason is mammary cancer. Dogs which are spayed before their first heat cycle have their risk of developing mammary cancer reduced by almost 99%. Repeated exposure to the hormones of the heat cycle significantly increase the risk of this deadly disease.

If you still have any doubt as to whether or not your dog should be spayed, you need to ask yourself one question: is there a reason it should not be sterilized? Unless you plan to breed your dog, there is simply no good reason to keep it intact.

### WHEN SHOULD MY DOG BE STERILIZED?

Your dog should be spayed between four and six months of age. Females usually have their first heat cycle around six months, and, as mentioned previously, spaying a female before her first heat cycle almost completely eliminates the occurrence of mammary cancer. We often recommend scheduling the procedure one week after the last set of puppy shots are given.

It is important to note that any dog at any age can be sterilized. There is no "window of opportunity" that can be missed. It is often slightly more expensive to sterilize an older dog because the surgery is more labor-intensive. However, the benefits far outweigh the price.

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