

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. 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 next day at 8:30 AM.

Costs and Explanations

Dog Spay

less than 12 mos.	\$268.33
older than 12 mos., 25 lbs. or less	\$275.12
25-50 lbs.	\$299.17
50 lbs. or more	\$325.51

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 \$150 to \$250. This discount is our donation to helping fight pet overpopulation. Normal surgery fees of \$4/minute are discounted in sterilization procedures.

IV catheterization and fluid delivery is performed for every spay, significantly decreasing the risk of anesthesia as well as giving us a route to deliver emergency medications should problems develop. We also use monitors to track your dog's heart rate and rhythm, blood pressure, and blood oxygenation.

All of our surgeries receive pain medication. Every patient receives pre-operative medication so they wake up less painful and go home on pain meds to keep them comfortable in the days after surgery.

Our clinic staffs two technicians to assist the doctor in surgery, giving us more eyes, ears, and hands to manage our patients. Including the surgeon, there are three highly-trained professionals present completely devoted to the well-being of your dog.

We are completely aware that there are low-cost options for this procedure in the Twin Ports. These are high-volume clinics, where your dog may not receive the attention it should have while anesthetized, or the kind of peri-operative care to ensure comfort

You have the right to know that there is an association between cost of care and quality of that care. We believe anesthesia and surgery are not casual medical procedures, and no clinic should ever sacrifice quality of care for volume. When your dog is under anesthesia, 100% of our focus is on her well-being.

Grand Avenue
Veterinary Clinic



Spaying Your Dog



Serving the healthcare needs of pets and their families in West Duluth and the Arrowhead region since 1985.

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There is a fair amount of confusion about the merits and drawbacks to spaying a female dog. We at Grand Avenue Veterinary Clinic hope you'll take this information into account.

SHOULD SHE 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 thousands 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 \$3000 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.
- **Cleanliness:** A female dog in heat will drip small amounts of blood from her vulva. This can cause headaches for people with carpeting.
- **Pyometra:** This is 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 \$250, 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 \$2500.
- **Mammary Cancer:** Spayed dogs can 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.

Ask yourself one simple question: is there a reason my dog should not be sterilized? Unless you plan to breed your dog, there is simply no good reason to keep it intact.

WHEN SHOULD SHE BE SPAYED?

For most breeds we recommend spaying after the puppy vaccinations are completed but prior to the first heat, at 4-6 months of age.

For larger breeds, we recommend allowing them to go through one heat cycle to reduce the risk of hip dysplasia. Studies have suggested that dogs whose adult body weight exceeds 65 pounds require puberty to help their bones know when to stop growing at the appropriate time. Popular breeds such as Labrador Retrievers and Golden Retrievers and giant breeds like St. Bernards should be spayed at 9-11 months of age, after they complete their first heat cycle.

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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