

How To Care For Your Female Dog After Surgery

The Surgery

Spaying a female dog is considered a major surgery. The surgery requires general anesthesia, the patient is completely asleep and unable to move or feel anything. The abdominal wall is opened and the ovaries and uterus are removed. After removing the ovaries and uterus, the dog is unable to become pregnant and will no longer have heat cycles. Recovery from anesthesia takes several hours, some longer than others. Generally, by the next day, the dog has recovered completely from the anesthesia. Recovery from the actual surgery takes at least a week.

What To Expect When You Get Your Dog Home

Some dogs are very active after surgery, others are quiet and mellow. It is common for dogs to vomit after surgery because of the anesthesia. Generally, the vomiting has ceased by the next day. Most dogs will want to eat some the night of their surgery; however, it may be the next day before some dogs will want to eat. Your dog may also look like she has been crying. This is caused by the eye ointment that we place in the eyes to keep them from drying out.

Feeding After Surgery

Adult dogs can be given a small amount of their regular food and a small amount of water at around 8 pm the night of the surgery. Some dogs will want to gobble down as much food and water as possible because they have not eaten in almost 24 hours. *Overeating can cause vomiting and diarrhea, so it is important to start with small amounts and gradually work back to a regular size meal.* By the next day, your dog can have her regular amount of food and water. Puppies (4 months and younger) are fed shortly after surgery once they are awake and walking. You may feed your puppy as soon as you get home.

Activity After Surgery

It is very important that you limit your dog's activity for at least 7-10 days. She has sutures (stitches) inside her body where the ovaries and uterus once were and along the inside and outside of the abdominal wall. These sutures provide strength to the tissues while they heal. The healing process takes at least seven days. If the sutures are put under any stress from jumping, running, moving too much, or being handled too much, they may break and internal bleeding may occur or the incision may come open. *It is best that she stay indoors for at least 7 days and be confined in a small area to limit activity.*

Caring For The Incision. We recommend Ecollars for all surgical patients.

It is natural for your pet to want to lick the incision site and keep it clean. However, *excessive licking can lead to irritation, swelling, and disruption of the sutures.* If this happens, infection could occur or the incision may come open. It is important to check the incision everyday for any swelling, bleeding, discharge, or pain. If she licks the incision too much, you should go to your nearest pet store and purchase an E-collar to prevent her from being able to reach the area.

Stitches

Unless you are told otherwise, your dog does not have external stitches. All stitches are on the inside and the very outer layer of skin is held together with surgical glue. If you are told that your dog has stitches, she will need to return in 7-10 days to have those removed.

Bathing

Your dog can not have a bath for at least 7 days.

Over The Counter Pain Relievers

We **do not recommend** that you give your pet any over the counter pain relievers such as aspirin, tylenal, ibuprofen, ect. Some of these drugs may be toxic to your pet and many interfere with blood clotting which could cause internal bleeding after surgery. If you feel that your pet needs pain medications, you should purchase the prescription pain reliever that we offer here.

Potential Complications

Spaying of an animal is a very safe surgery; however, *complications can occur.* Please contact us, your regular veterinarian, or an emergency clinic if you notice any of the following: pale gums, depression, vomiting, diarrhea, inappetence, discharge from the incision, bleeding from incision, swelling or pain at the incision, discharge from vulva, difficulty urinating, bloody urination, coughing, sneezing, labored breathing, or anything else you feel concerned about.

Vaccines and Vaccine Reactions

Vaccines are designed to increase your pet's immunity to certain diseases. No vaccine is 100% effective. It takes at least two weeks for your pet's immunity to increase after being vaccinated. Vaccine reactions can occur with any vaccine. Symptoms include, but are not limited to, vomiting, diarrhea, swelling of the face and legs, depression, pain at the injection site, difficulty breathing. If you notice any of these symptoms please contact us, your regular veterinarian, or an emergency clinic.

SANTA 678-560-6070
Sandy Springs ER 404-252-7881
GVS 404-459-0903

Cobb ER 770-424-9157
Roswell ER 770-594-2266

Westside ER 770-819-1090
Riverdale ER 770-994-9291

I, acting as owner or agent for the owner of _____, have read and fully understand the discharge instructions listed above. I understand that my failure to follow these instructions could lead to complications and/or delayed recovery.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

DO NOT SIGN UNLESS YOU HAVE READ THIS FORM COMPLETELY.