



GLASTONBURY

GOOD REASONS TO HAVE A BITCH SPAVED

Benefits in health and behaviour: Spaying prevents cancer, cysts and infections of the ovaries and womb. Infection of the womb (pyometra) is a very serious condition requiring emergency surgery. Spaying also reduces the risk of breast cancer by up to 95% if performed at a young age. The earlier a bitch is spayed the greater the protection.

"Seasons" or heats are abolished, which means that a bitch will be more contented & less likely to wander. The risk of unwanted pregnancies is removed and false pregnancies stop.



WHAT IS INVOLVED ?

Timing: If the operation is to be performed before the first season the best age is four to five months. Any older and there is a risk that the first season may be about to start meaning the surgical risk would be higher. In an older bitch the best time is three to five months after the end of a season but not if she is producing milk during a false pregnancy.

The procedure: The operation involves removal of the ovaries and womb through an incision along the midline of the bitch's abdomen. The length of the incision varies depending on the size of the bitch and healing takes place quickly. Normally at Orchard we use hidden sutures which are more comfortable post operatively and do not require to be removed. There is a post-operative check at 10 days.

SOME POINTS TO CONSIDER:

There is some risk of urinary incontinence in later life particularly in breeds naturally prone to this condition anyway such as Dobermanns and Old English Sheepdogs. The risk is increased in bitches with docked tails and if they are spayed prior to the first season. This condition responds well to medication but in some breeds it may be better to wait until after the first season before spaying.

Some puppies have a mild vaginal discharge which clears up naturally after their first season. In these cases it is important not to spay before the first season.

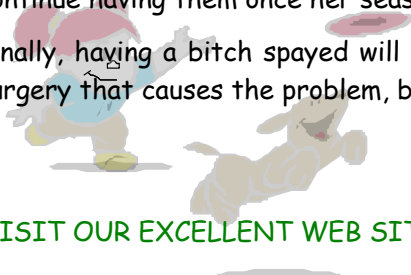
Some breeds (e.g. cocker spaniels and red setters) may show slight lightening of areas of the coat after a period of time. The change is purely cosmetic & requires no treatment.

OLD WIVES' TALES!

Spaying does not change the character or temperament of a bitch and bitches do not experience 'hot flushes' or any of the adverse effects occasionally seen in humans following the same or similar operations.

Allowing a bitch to have a litter will not settle her down and may even have the opposite effect - an anxious bitch will have anxious puppies. Nor will having a litter stop a bitch having false pregnancies, she will just continue having them once her seasons restart.

Finally, having a bitch spayed will not make her fat. Some people use this as an excuse but in fact it's not surgery that causes the problem, but overfeeding and lack of exercise!



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