



## Kitchener Waterloo Humane Society Animal Hospital Spay-Neuter Assistance Program Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is a spay or neuter procedure?**

A “spay” is the common name of the sterilization or “de-sexing” procedure performed on female dogs and cats. The medical name for this procedure is an ovariectomy. This procedure involves making a small incision into the abdomen of the animal and removing the ovaries and uterus. After having this procedure your pet will not be able to get pregnant, and will no longer produce the female hormones released by the ovaries.

A “neuter” is the common name of the sterilization or “de-sexing” procedure performed on male dogs and cats. The medical name for this procedure is orchidectomy. This procedure involves removing the testicles. After having this procedure your pet will not be able to impregnate females, and will no longer produce the male hormones released by the testes.

### **What are the benefits of spaying or neutering my pet?**

- It reduces pet overpopulation by eliminating unwanted litters, reducing the burden of homeless animals on the community and animal shelters
- It reduces or removes the risk of disease, infection and cancer of the pet’s reproductive system (i.e. mammary cancer, prostate cancer, uterus infection)
- Hormone related behaviours are reduced or eliminated:
  - Female heat cycles and associated behaviours are eliminated
  - Male cats may no longer spray or smell, male dogs may urine mark less frequently on walks
  - It ends or reduces attempts by the pet to get outside or run away to find a mate
  - Hormone related aggression issues may be reduced or resolved

### **How long after surgery will my pet be unable to reproduce?**

Female cats and dogs are unable to reproduce as soon as the surgery is completed

Male cats and dogs may be able to reproduce for up to three weeks after surgery, so should be kept separate from any un-spayed females during that time

### **If I have more than one pet, do I need to submit more than one application?**

Each pet requires its own application as part of its medical record

### **Why was my application for spay-neuter services declined?**

Due to the high volume nature of our services, we have strict restrictions regarding which animals are acceptable candidates for anesthesia and surgery through our clinic. Please see our Eligibility Requirements for more information and detailed restrictions.



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### **What makes surgery at your clinic different from at my local veterinarian?**

Our clinic is a high-volume, high-quality spay-neuter (HVHQSN) clinic. This type of clinic is designed to provide means to control pet overpopulation using efficient surgical procedures, while still offering a high standard of medical care. Some ways in which we differ from most local veterinary clinics include:

- We do not offer pre-anesthetic bloodwork. Please see your regular veterinarian if you would like to discuss the benefits of this service or to have it performed.
- We do not place IV catheters or administer IV fluids during surgery, with the exception of female dogs or specific patients that may require additional care
- We do not place endotracheal tubes to secure airways or administer additional oxygen or anesthetic drugs, with the exception of female dogs. We do provide oxygen or anesthetic via a mask over the pet's face if required
- Our surgeons utilize specialized high-volume surgical techniques to reduce surgery and anesthetic time, which may be different from your local veterinarian's techniques
- Due to the number of animals receiving services at our clinic, the ratio of staff to patients is lower than typical in your local veterinary office, which means your pet may not get as much individual attention

We do NOT differ from your local veterinarian in that we offer high quality anesthetic and pain control drugs, use high quality medical supplies, and have qualified staff attending to your pet

### **Why does my pet have to be microchipped?**

We have made the implantation of a microchip mandatory for any animal accessing our spay-neuter services. This cost is included in your surgery cost. We believe that microchipping is the best way of providing permanent identification for your pet, and want to ensure that we can identify any animal in the future if we see them again.

The microchip is small, approximately the size of a grain of rice, and is implanted with the use of a needle while your pet is under anesthetic. It is placed under the skin over your pet's shoulder blades. After it is implanted, your pet will not feel the microchip. We register the microchip with the information you provide to us at no cost to you. If your pet was to get lost in the future, the microchip can be scanned at any shelter or veterinary clinic that has a microchip scanner.

### **What is the tattoo that my pet receives?**

It is standard at the majority of spay-neuter clinics for pets to be marked with a small green linear tattoo near their incision site (or near the belly button for male cats) after their procedure. This is done with a small incision into the superficial layers of the skin where the ink is placed, and special surgical glue is placed over top to seal the skin. This does not cause your pet any additional discomfort, and once the hair grows back in it is barely visible. The goal of this tattoo is to prevent any unnecessary surgery in the future by having your pet easily identified as having been spayed or neutered.

### **Can my pet be vaccinated while it is there for surgery?**

We strongly recommend that you ensure your pet is up to date on their vaccinations at your regular veterinarian before bringing them to our facility for surgery. Due to the nature of the sheltering facility and the number of animals from



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various sources moving through the facility, there is risk of exposure to infectious agents. Vaccinations performed less than two weeks prior to surgery or at the time of surgery will not provide adequate protection against these illnesses. We will not be responsible for treatment of contagious diseases subsequent to your pet's stay in our facility

If you elect not to vaccinate your pet prior to its surgical appointment, we do offer vaccinations for both core (DA2PPV for dogs and FVRCP for cats) and rabies virus at time of surgery for an additional fee of \$15 per animal. Please contact your veterinarian to discuss which vaccinations your pet may require, and bring any record of previous vaccination to your appointment.

### **What if my pet has fleas?**

Any animal that is found to have evidence of fleas (live fleas or flea dirt) at time of pre-operative exam or surgery will be administered a dose of flea treatment (Capstar) at that time to prevent contamination of the surgical site intra-operatively. There will be an additional \$10 charge for this service. This medication is very safe, and works very quickly to kill adult fleas. However, it will not rid the pet or your house of any other fleas or eggs, and you will need to speak to your veterinary about ongoing flea treatment and control.

### **Will my pet have medication to take when they get home?**

All animals receive a pain medication prior to surgery that will last for 24 hours. We dispense pain medication to go home with female cats for an additional 2 days, male dogs for an additional 2 days, and female dogs for an additional four days. Male cats do not need additional pain medication. Instructions on how to give the medication will be provided when you pick up your pet. **DO NOT GIVE YOUR PET ANY HUMAN PAIN MEDICATION**, this can be very dangerous and even fatal to your pet.

### **Does my pet have to wear a "cone" after surgery?**

We require that female cats wear an appropriately e-collar or "cone" after surgery for 3-5 days, and both male and female dogs for 5-7 days to prevent any licking or chewing at their incision. Male cats typically do not need an e-collar. You can provide your own e-collar, or we can provide you with one. We will not be held responsible for any complications that arise related to your pet's surgical incision if they were not wearing an appropriate e-collar.