

# Ovariohysterectomy Discharge Instructions



Part of Banfield's mission is to educate owners how better veterinary care will maximize the life of their pet as well as their own. Today your pet visited the hospital for an ovariohysterectomy procedure (commonly referred to as a spay). This handout is intended to educate owners about the procedure and the post-operative care your pet will require.

## What is an ovariohysterectomy?

This is a surgical procedure performed on female pets under general anesthesia where the reproductive organs (ovaries and uterus) are removed. Although this is a very commonly performed procedure, it's a major abdominal surgery and close post-operative monitoring and care is very important.

## Why spay?

This procedure will eliminate the possibility of several types of diseases including ovarian and uterine cancer and uterine infections, all of which can be life-threatening. Your pet will no longer experience heat cycles and will no longer be capable of becoming pregnant. The likelihood of developing some behavioral concerns and other diseases, such as mammary cancer, may also be reduced, especially when the spay is performed before your pet's second heat cycle.

## Will my pet be in pain?

General anesthesia was used throughout the surgical procedure and your pet was given an injection of a pain medication which should keep your pet comfortable tonight. Your veterinarian will prescribe a tablet or liquid pain reliever for you to give your pet by mouth at home over the next few days to ensure that your pet is comfortable. If you feel your pet is in pain or is paying excessive attention or chewing at the surgery site, please contact your veterinarian for recommendations.

## What can I expect her first night home?

Someone should stay home with your pet the first night.

**Activity level.** While it is not unusual for your pet to be sleepy and move around more slowly the first night following surgery, your pet should still be willing and able to go for a short walk to urinate and defecate. Do not allow any running, jumping or excess activity for the week following surgery. If your pet refuses to get up, is unable to walk or doesn't respond to you, please contact your Banfield veterinarian (or local emergency clinic after hours).

**Feeding instructions.** Some pets may have mild nausea following general anesthesia. Wait a few hours after returning home to offer a small amount of water. If you don't notice any problems, you may offer water free-choice and a small meal (1/4 to 1/2 normal amount) tonight. If you notice any vomiting or diarrhea, do not offer food or water until the following morning. Return to your regular routine for feeding the next day. If your pet refuses to eat or drink for more than 24 hours or has more than one or two episodes of vomiting or diarrhea, please contact your Banfield veterinarian.

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For additional information, please contact your Banfield medical team.

## What can I expect the week following surgery?

**Restrict your pet's activity for the first week following surgery.** Unlike people, we can't ask that pets restrict their activity post-operatively. Confine your pet indoors and take dogs outside on a leash to eliminate. Most pets are ready to go back to their normal routines the day after surgery; however it's very important that you ensure that there is no running, jumping, leaping onto and off of furniture, etc., for the first week following surgery. Excessive activity can lead to bleeding and bruising of the incision line, impaired healing or other complications postoperatively.

**Watch for licking or chewing at the incision site.** This is very important as pets can open up incision sites very quickly which can cause infection, delay healing or even require additional surgery, which can be twice as expensive due to the damage caused. When your pet is unattended, or if you have noticed your pet paying attention to their incision site at all, your pet should wear an Elizabethan collar (cone), especially at night.

**Keep incision site clean and dry.** Regardless of whether your pet has skin sutures or sutures beneath the skin, it's important to make sure that the incision site remains clean and dry. No bathing or swimming for 10 to 14 days after the surgery.

**If your pet was in heat at the time of surgery,** she may still allow a male to breed her, which is dangerous to her health. Keep her indoors and separate from any intact males for 10 to 14 days after the surgery. For dogs that were in heat at the time of surgery, some vaginal discharge may be noted for a week following surgery.

**Schedule a recheck in 10 to 14 days.** Discuss this with your Banfield veterinarian; if external sutures (stitches) were placed, they will be removed at this appointment.

## What to watch for?

If any of the following are noticed, please contact your Banfield veterinarian immediately. If you notice problems after our regular hospital hours, please contact your local emergency clinic.

- Suture site redness, oozing, swelling, missing sutures or pain on light touching (check this area several times daily)
- Excessive licking, chewing or bothering the suture site (this can be a sign of pain, your veterinarian may prescribe additional pain medications and/or an Elizabethan collar to prevent self trauma)
- Vomiting or diarrhea, more than one or two episodes or for longer than 24 hours
- Lack of thirst or appetite, for over 24 hours
- Straining to urinate or unable to pass urine
- Coughing (because an endotracheal tube is placed during general anesthesia, a mild cough is normal for 24 hours, but should not continue or progressively worsen or interfere with your pet's breathing or activity level)
- Listlessness, inactivity or nonresponsiveness
- Soreness, stiffness or pain that does not respond to pain medications



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