

Laparoscopic Bitch Spays – The new way to spay using Keyhole Surgery!



Drove Veterinary Hospital has joined the revolution! We are now one of a few select hospitals able to perform keyhole surgery, also known as Laparoscopy. This modern and specialised technique is used for a range of operations, including bitch spays.

What are the advantages of spaying?

There are several indications to spay your bitch, including:

- Prevention of 'heat' – most bitches reach puberty between six and twelve months, with 'heat' lasting for 2-3 weeks every six to nine months thereafter. There is no menopause so a bitch will continue to cycle into old age.
- Prevent unwanted pregnancy – when the ovaries are removed, your bitch will no longer be fertile.
- Prevention of false pregnancy – this can occur a few weeks after 'heat'. Signs may include nesting behavior, mammary development and production of milk.
- Prevent cancer – Removing the ovaries reduces certain hormone levels, making mammary cancer less likely to occur later in life. This is most pronounced when spaying prior to the second season.
- Prevent uterine infection called Pyometra – This is another hormonally driven condition, hence removal of the ovaries prevents this life-threatening illness.

What are the advantages of laparoscopic surgery?

Keyhole surgery allows the procedure to be performed via two small holes of approximately 5-10mm. Incisions in conventional surgery are 10x this ranging from 5-10cm in length. **A smaller incision helps make the surgery less painful, reduces the risk of wound infection, allows faster recovery and involves fewer stitches.** However, it is important to remember that your pet has still had surgery, and will need to be rested and monitored closely following their return home. Appropriate pain relief will be given during and after the operation to ensure minimal discomfort throughout.

We have had some excellent feedback following our laparoscopic spays, and find it is a particularly good option for young energetic dogs who can be difficult to keep calm following conventional surgery, leading to delayed wound healing. The smaller incisions used in laparoscopy allow your dog to get back to normal exercise faster than with traditional surgery.

How does laparoscopic surgery work?

Two to three small holes are made through the skin and abdominal muscles. Through one, a small but high resolution camera is inserted. The abdomen is gently distended with air to separate the organs, allowing excellent visualisation so surgical procedures can be carried out safely. Specialist instruments are then inserted through the other hole(s) to perform the surgery inside the body, using the camera to magnify the organs, ensuring maximum precision, whilst being minimally invasive.

Can laparoscopic surgery be performed on any dog?

Laparoscopic surgery can be considered for any dog in good body condition. The procedure carries increased risk in over-weight pets because abdominal fat reduces visualisation of the organs. If your pet is overweight please ask us for help – we offer free weight clinics, expert advice and guidance on different diets available to help get your pet back into shape.

What else is laparoscopic surgery used for?

Laparoscopy can also be used for exploratory abdominal surgery, such as evaluating and taking a biopsy of a tumour, investigating a liver problem, or retrieving samples from an inflamed pancreas.

How do I book my dog in for a laparoscopic spay?

The best time to book your bitch in for spaying is approximately three months after a season. The pre-operative procedure is the same as for a conventional spay. Due to the specialist equipment required, laparoscopy can only be performed at our Veterinary Hospital in Wroughton, not at any of our branch surgeries. An appointment will be booked with the Veterinary Surgeon prior to the operation to make sure your pet is healthy and discuss the procedure and aftercare in more detail, as well as answering any questions you may have. As with any anaesthetic, it is important to starve your pet for 12 hours to ensure the stomach is empty.

Is there anything else I should know?

Traditionally a bitch spay involves removal of the ovaries and uterus (ovariohysterectomy). However, with laparoscopy we recommend removal of the ovaries only (ovariectomy). The latter is less invasive, but still carries the usual benefits because the ovaries are the source of hormones which cause seasons, false pregnancy, mammary cancer and uterine infection. Even though the uterus (womb) is left inside the abdomen, your bitch will be infertile without her ovaries.

Any questions?

Please do not hesitate to contact us for information and advice about your pet or any of the topics raised in this leaflet. Drove Veterinary Hospital is proud to now offer laparoscopy and we hope you will benefit from this additional service. To arrange an appointment for a free pre-operative consultation please contact the hospital on 01793 522483.