

At Garston Veterinary Group we are constantly looking for improvements to the services we provide for you and your pet. With this in mind, we can now offer to neuter ('spay') your female dog using a laparoscopic technique. We are the only practice in the immediate area who offers this service. Compared to a traditional spay it is less painful and your pet recovers quicker. Read on to find out why this technique may be the one to choose for your pet.

Why spay at all in the first place?

Research shows that neutered pets are likely to live longer, happier lives. There are many reasons for this including a massive reduction in the risk of mammary (breast) cancer and infections of the uterus (womb) in spayed bitches - both conditions can be life threatening.



So what is laparoscopic surgery?

This type of surgery is also known as 'keyhole' surgery, because the procedure is all done through very small incisions in the body wall. An endoscope with a camera attached and various instruments are passed into the abdomen through the small incisions. The surgeon then watches the image on a TV monitor - a very clear and magnified view. This compares with the traditional way of operating inside a patient's abdomen, essentially making a large hole in the body wall and looking inside.

What are the benefits of laparoscopic surgery in general?

The benefits of laparoscopic surgery are well established in human medicine - basically, you end up with smaller wounds, it hurts less afterwards and you are back to normal quicker! And this equally applies to our pets.

What does a spay done in the traditional way involve?

A fairly large incision is made in the abdominal wall - larger incisions are generally more painful than smaller ones. The ovaries must be pulled away from their attachments on the body wall so that the surgeon can see to tie off the blood vessels. This tearing of attachments is a major source of pain after the surgery. The ovaries and the entire uterus are removed - this is technically known as 'ovariohysterectomy'.



LAPAROSCOPIC SPAYING



**A Better Way for your Pet at
Garston Veterinary Group**

To summarise the benefits to your pet of laparoscopic spaying over traditional spaying:

- **LESS PAIN** – not only are the skin wounds smaller, but this technique requires much less stretching and pulling of tissue. All this means that your pet experiences much less post operative discomfort.
- **QUICKER RECOVERY** – as there is less post operative discomfort and the wounds are smaller, your pet can be back to normal exercise much quicker. This is especially applicable to active, boisterous dogs which are difficult to rest in the post operative period. Bear in mind that following a traditional spay, your pet is supposed to be on restricted exercise for 3 weeks! We know how difficult it is to enforce rest on an active dog who doesn't want to rest! After this technique, most dogs are back to **NORMAL** exercise after 10 days!
- **LESS RISK OF POST OPERATIVE COMPLICATIONS** – as the surgical incisions are very small and only sterile surgical instruments enter the patient's body, the risk of infection and wound breakdown are reduced. The fact that the surgeon sees the surgical site much clearer and magnified also increases the safety. There is also a reduced risk of post operative gut upsets with this technique, as the bowels are disturbed less.



Are there any other differences between laparoscopic and traditional spaying?

Yes. The equipment used is extremely expensive and therefore the procedure is necessarily more expensive - but probably not as expensive as you might think! Also, due to the way we secure the ovaries to the body wall during the procedure, the area of your pet's fur that will be clipped is larger to ensure sterility - but it will grow back at the same rate as a small clip! All in all, the benefits far outweigh these two small points!

SO..... If you were having surgery, wouldn't you want to choose **LESS PAIN** and **QUICKER RECOVERY?** Well now you can choose this for your pet too!!

For an estimate and any questions please do not hesitate to contact any of our surgeries.

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How is our laparoscopic spay different to the traditional spay?

Two small incisions are made in the body wall only. One is used for the endoscope with a camera attached, the other for an instrument to be passed into the abdomen. The ovaries are located and electrosurgery is used to seal the blood vessels. The ovaries are removed from the abdomen through the same incision through which the instruments are passed (this is why one of the skin incisions is slightly bigger than the other - ovaries vary in size and have to come out through the hole!). All this is done without any pulling or tearing of tissue attachments. We do NOT remove the uterus, just the ovaries and this is known as 'ovariectomy'. The reason we do not remove the uterus is simple - research has shown that it is unnecessary, more



painful, and it is more invasive than just removing the ovaries. The major concern in the past was that leaving the uterus would mean the patient could still develop a uterine infection. This view is not supported by research as once the hormonal influence of the ovaries is gone, the risk of a uterine infection ever occurring is extremely low. Without her ovaries your pet will not come into season, and will still enjoy the same medical benefits (eg reduction in risk of mammary cancer) as she would if her uterus had also been removed.

What is done at Garston Veterinary Group to tackle post operative pain for this procedure?

We use a technique known as 'multimodal analgesia'. This essentially means that several different types of pain relief are used which is far more effective than using a single type. It is worth noting that however much pain relief is used, it is not feasible to totally eliminate pain - a fact which will be well known to anyone who has undergone a major surgical procedure.

We do as much as we can to reduce your pet's discomfort following this procedure, which will include:

- Opioid (morphine like drug) and anti-inflammatory painkiller given prior to surgery which last into the post operative period.
- Local anaesthetic used at incision sites which again lasts into the post operative period
- Oral anti-inflammatory painkillers for several days after the surgery.

As a result of this approach we expect that you will see that your pet is happy and comfortable in the post operative period.