



Why is there an extra fee for dogs and cats that are In-Heat?

When a female dog or cat goes into heat, their reproductive organs and related blood vessels become engorged with blood. Your veterinarian will need to take extra precautions and it takes more time to complete the surgery. *Many owners make a spay appointment for their pet not realizing she's in heat when the day comes. It is often difficult to tell if a young cat is in heat before the surgical procedure is started, and the spay surgery must be completed, in-heat or not.*

What does "in-heat" mean?

CATS go through their first estrus, or heat cycle, at approximately 6 months of age when feline puberty hits. **It's best to get your cat spayed before that first heat cycle**, but it's not always possible, especially if she's a stray. When she goes into heat, she's fertile and eager to mate. Besides the incessant meowing, she'll constantly lick her privates, roll around on the floor and possibly spray urine around the house. Depending on the individual cat, she'll stay in heat for seven to 10 days. If she doesn't get pregnant she'll come back into heat every three to four weeks from spring to fall.

DOGS go through their first estrus, or heat cycle, between six and 24 months old. It tends to occur earlier for small-breed dogs and later for large-breed dogs. Estrus is the stage in a female dog's reproductive cycle during which she becomes receptive to mating with males. At this time, estrogen levels first increase and then sharply decrease, and mature eggs are released from the ovaries. **Ideally, your dog should be spayed before she enters her first heat cycle.**

An unspayed female usually goes into heat twice yearly, about every six months. When she goes into heat, your female dog may appear nervous, easily distracted and more alert than usual. She may also urinate more often than she normally does. You'll most probably notice changes in her behavior; this is caused by a shift in her hormone balance. At first, vaginal discharge is blood-tinged and the vulva is swollen. When the female is receptive to males, vaginal discharge decreases in amount and is straw-colored.

Spay Surgery

The spay surgery is an ovariectomy, meaning the vet removes her uterus, fallopian tubes and ovaries. Your vet will make a small incision in the pet's abdomen and remove the organs. Spayed pets no longer add to the pet overpopulation problem, and the procedure means your pet won't suffer from uterine or ovarian cancer. Her odds of developing mammary cancer are significantly reduced.

Why Should I Spay My Dog?

Aside from the toll it takes on your dog to give birth to a litter and raise pups, the number of homeless animals who are euthanized each year makes it an irresponsible decision to allow your dog to mate. Though many people have heard that there are health benefits in allowing a dog to have a litter before she is spayed, this belief is unsubstantiated. In fact, the rigors of giving birth and raising pups can lead to premature aging and, in some cases, death. It has also been shown that dogs who are spayed prior to their first heat cycle have a much reduced risk for mammary gland tumors.