Laparoscopic ovariectomy
(Keyhole spay)
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Laparoscopy:

Laparoscopy is the term given to the endoscopic examination of the abdominal cavity either for diagnostic or treatment purposes. In certain circumstances this 'key-hole' surgical technique can provide a number of advantages over conventional surgery. Where its use is appropriate, the key-hole technique usually involves two or three small incisions (cuts) rather than the single large incision associated with conventional surgery.

Advantages of laparoscopy over conventional surgery include:

- Reduced pain from the surgical wounds – the pet is more comfortable post-operatively
- Smaller surgical wounds
- Fewer stitches
- A faster return to normal activity, due to improved patient comfort and reduced scar tissue formation
Ovariectomy (bitch or cat spay/neutering):

We are very pleased to be able to offer ‘key-hole’ neutering surgery. The procedure can be performed on patients registered with Willows’ first opinion practice or those referred by their regular practice specifically for this procedure.

The procedure involves making three small (5mm, or 10mm in larger dogs) incisions in the skin that will normally be closed without the need for external stitches. The operation is performed on a day-patient basis. Most pets do not need to stay in overnight and are re-united with their owners later the same day.

The procedure involves removal of the ovaries, leaving the uterus (the womb) in place. Conventional open surgical spaying (neutering) of cats and bitches (female dogs) usually involves removal of the ovaries and uterus together (ovario-hysterectomy). The key-hole ovariectomy operation is quicker, less involved and less painful than the conventional spay procedure. There is no evidence that leaving the uterus behind results in any increased risk of incontinence or womb infection in the future when compared to conventional surgery.

If your bitch is coming to us for a laparoscopic spay, she should be starved from 10pm the night before surgery but can have water freely available until the time of admission to the hospital. The surgery is normally performed in the morning, and on the day of the procedure you will need to book an early appointment (8.45am) to see the specialist who will be performing the surgery. Your pet should be able to go home in the afternoon/evening, usually between 4 and 6pm. These procedures are performed on certain days of the week, but not every day.

Those patients referred from other practices need to come with a full medical history from your vet and a letter or fax from your vet stating that they are in agreement with the referral for neutering. At the time of discharge you will receive a detailed post-operative care sheet (see below), and your vet will be sent information regarding your pet’s procedure and post-operative care requirements. A visit to your vet is generally recommended 2 to 3 days after the procedure in order to check your dog or cat’s progress.

As with humans undergoing laparoscopic surgery, we do ask that we are given permission to convert to a more conventional approach during the procedure if necessary. This is only required in the unlikely event that unforeseen circumstances arise which result in the risks to your pet being reduced by converting to conventional surgery.

If you are interested in requesting a referral to Willows for laparoscopic neutering then please discuss it with your vet and ask if he or she would be willing to refer your pet for the procedure. Upon receipt of the referral information you will be able to make an appointment for surgery on a date that is convenient for you and your pet. As with conventional neutering of female dogs, we recommend that the surgery is performed 2 to 3 months following a season.

Post-operative instructions

Post-operative care:

Please observe your pet’s demeanour and appetite over the next few days and ring Willows if you notice any change. She may be a little quieter than normal for 12-24 hours after the anaesthesia and surgery, but should return to normal after this. She may be offered food and water during the evening following surgery.

The adhesive dressing should be removed in 48 hours if it is still in place, or earlier if it becomes soiled. If it comes off before then it does not need to be replaced.

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Please examine the wounds twice daily for evidence of heat, redness, pain, swelling or discharge and let Willows know if these are noted. Please keep the large collar on for 10-14 days. The collar may be removed when she is under direct supervision by you if you are able to prevent her licking the wound.

Please take your pet to your local veterinary surgeon in 3-5 days’ time for a re-check appointment so that the wounds can be examined. There are no stitches to be removed.

Please restrict your pet to lead exercise only for one week, including in the garden. After this, exercise may return to normal.

If you have any additional concerns about her recovery from anaesthesia and surgery, then please ring Willows and not your veterinary practice, this includes out of hours queries.

**Post-operative medication:**

**Metacam** (painkiller) The dose for your patient’s weight to be given once daily with food for 7 days. Please stop the medication if vomiting or diarrhoea are seen and let Willows know. Start medication the morning following surgery.

**Tramadol** 50mg (additional painkiller) Give the indicated dose 2-3 times daily for up to 2-3 days. Please use this drug if Metacam does not provide enough pain relief. Please stop the medication if your pet has difficulty passing urine or seems constipated or drowsy. Start medication the morning following surgery.

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**Why should I bring my pet to Willows?**

Our soft tissue surgery service is led by recognised, accredited Specialists and we aim to provide the best possible care and treatment for your pet in our state-of-the art hospital. Our soft tissue surgery team work closely with Specialists in the disciplines of Internal Medicine, Cardiology, Orthopaedics, Neurology, Ophthalmology, Oncology and Anaesthesia and the hospital provides 24-hour veterinary and nursing care to ensure the best possible outcome in each and every case.

*If you have any queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.*