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When Should I Spey My Dog?

- Speying eliminates the risk of unwanted pregnancy and heat associated behaviours.

- Speying also eliminates the risk of pyometra (uterine infection). 25% of intact (not speyed) female dogs will develop pyometra by the age of 10 years. This can be fatal in 4-17% of cases.

- Intact (not speyed) female dogs are at risk of developing mammary (breast) cancer. The risk is almost completely removed by speying before the first heat cycle.

- The first heat cycle usually happens between 6 - 18 months of age depending on size and breed. Large dog breeds generally reach puberty later than small breeds.

- Spaying while the dog is younger and smaller makes for less problems with excessive bleeding during surgery and a quicker, less painful recovery after surgery. The more mature and developed the dog is the longer and more difficult the spey surgery will be and it is generally more costly.

- There can be an increased incidence of urinary incontinence associated with spaying dogs before the first heat cycle, however the evidence for this is inconsistent. Urinary incontinence is a treatable, non-life-threatening condition.

- Some breeds, notably large and giant breed dogs can sometimes have a higher incidence of joint and bone issues such as osteoarthritis and cruciate ligament rupture when they are speyed young (before skeletal maturity).

- Issues regarding joint and bone problems and urinary incontinence are hugely dependent on genetics, such that findings for one breed or dog do not always hold true for another.