

Canine Spay (Ovariohysterectomy)

Mermaid SANDS | Post-Operative Discharge Instructions

Your dog underwent a spay procedure today. Both ovaries and the uterus were removed under general anesthesia. She recovered well from anesthesia. Please review these instructions carefully.

What to Expect Tonight

- **Normal signs:** grogginess, mild wobbliness, decreased appetite, mild incision swelling, occasional cough from the anesthesia tube.
- **These should steadily improve** over 24–48 hours.

Seek urgent care immediately if:

- Your dog is extremely weak, pale, collapsing, or difficult to arouse

Feeding

- **Tonight:** offer about half of your pet's normal meal, then the rest 1–2 hours later. This helps prevent overeating and vomiting after anesthesia.
- **Not eating tonight?** That can be normal — try again in the morning.
- **Tomorrow:** resume normal feeding.
- **Water:** keep fresh water available at all times.

Activity Restriction (10–14 Days)

Strict activity restriction is critical for healing. No running, jumping, rough play, or swimming — leash walks only for bathroom breaks. Excessive activity is the most common cause of incision complications.

Surgical Closure & Incision Care

The incision is closed in three layers (abdominal wall, subcutaneous tissue, and a final layer inside the skin) using absorbable suture material. There are no sutures to remove unless you're told otherwise. Check the incision once daily, keep it clean and dry, and prevent licking or chewing at all times. Mild redness and minimal swelling are normal.

A small amount of straw-colored to red-tinged discharge at the incision site can be normal, similar to a scab. If cleaning is needed, use a clean cloth with warm tap water. Do not use hydrogen peroxide — it can delay healing.

If your pet was in heat at the time of surgery, a small amount of residual bloody discharge from the vulva can be normal.

Seek evaluation by your regular veterinarian or the emergency clinic listed below if you notice:

- Active bleeding or thick discharge
- Increasing redness, significant swelling, or expanding bruising
- Incision opening or foul odor

E-Collar (Cone)

Your dog must wear an e-collar at all times for 10–14 days. Do not remove until the incision has been examined and cleared by a veterinarian. Even brief licking can cause infection or incision breakdown.

Pain Management

Your dog received pain medication in the hospital. Give anti-inflammatory medication exactly as prescribed. Do not combine with other medications unless directed. Never give human pain medications.

If you elected enhanced pain control (opioid support): expected effects include increased sleepiness, mild wobbliness, dilated pupils, slower responsiveness, decreased appetite, and mild constipation. These should gradually improve as the medication wears off.

Seek urgent care if you notice:

- Extreme sedation (unable to stand or respond)
- Agitation that does not settle, or severe disorientation
- Persistent vomiting or difficulty breathing

Giving Oral Medication

- **Hand pilling:** place the pill at the back of the tongue, close the mouth, and encourage swallowing.
- **Pill plunger:** use to safely deliver the pill toward the back of the tongue.
- **Pill paste:** coat the pill with a small amount of pill paste and offer it directly — confirm your pet fully swallows it.
- **Hiding in food (use if other methods aren't working):** mix the pill into a small amount of food, fed separately from the regular meal. This method carries a higher risk of a missed or partial dose if your pet doesn't finish the food — confirm your pet eats all of it before assuming the dose was given. Don't crush unless instructed.

If you're unsure whether a dose was swallowed, don't repeat it without veterinary guidance.

Elimination

Urination should occur within 24 hours. It's normal for pets not to have a bowel movement for 3–4 days after anesthesia. Seek evaluation by your regular veterinarian or the emergency clinic listed below if your pet hasn't urinated within 24 hours, or if it's been longer than 4 days without a bowel movement.

Follow-Up & When to Seek Care

We do not provide post-operative follow-up appointments. For routine questions or a recheck, contact your regular veterinarian.

For urgent or emergency concerns: Veterinary Medical Center of Indian River County — 1833 US-1, Vero Beach, FL 32960 — (772) 794-5800. If unavailable, proceed to your nearest emergency veterinary hospital.

Thank you for trusting us with your dog's surgical care. We are honored to provide accessible surgical services to our community.

Mermaid SANDS Team