



# Moonee Valley Animal Hospital

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## The benefits of female dog desexing (speying).

Speying is the surgical removal of the ovaries and uterus from a female dog. A bitch who has been speyed will not come into season and cannot fall pregnant. After the surgery the majority of dogs experience little or no obvious discomfort.

There are a number of reasons why it is recommended that female dogs should be speyed:

1. **Breast Cancer.** Female dogs are three times more likely to develop breast cancer than women. The number of times your dog comes on heat directly increases her risk of breast cancer. A dog speyed before her first season has only a 0.5% risk of developing breast cancer, compared to a risk of 26% or greater for a bitch that has not been speyed by the time she reaches 3 years old.
2. **Pyometra** is a potentially fatal infection of the uterus. It can occur in any unspeyed female dog whether or not she has been mated. Treatment for pyometra usually involves emergency surgery to remove the infected uterus. This is obviously a much more risky procedure than the simple spey procedure for a healthy dog.
3. **Unwanted pregnancies** result in thousands of puppies being given up for adoption or abandoned every year. Especially traumatic are the pregnancies of young, immature dogs who may not even be fully grown themselves when they become pregnant. These young mothers are much more likely to suffer from birth problems or have difficulty feeding and looking after the puppies. Speying your female dog is the **ONLY** way to guarantee that she won't become pregnant.
4. **Behaviour.** Female dog behaviour is not controlled by hormones to the same extent as male dog behaviour. A nervous or aggressive dog does not become calmer after having puppies, in fact, these flighty females are often the ones who experience the most traumatic pregnancies, sometimes savaging the pups or becoming very aggressive to people.

Contrary to popular belief desexing will **not** alter the normal innate behaviour of your dog, nor will it cause her to become fat and lazy – this is a consequence of overfeeding and inadequate exercise for her needs.