

Reasons Not to Spay Your Bitch at the Time of Her C- Section

There are a number of reasons we do not recommend spaying at the time of C-section

- 1) The blood supply to the uterus is markedly increased to support the pregnancy. Ligation (tying off) the blood vessels is done when the bitch is under anesthesia so her blood pressure is lower. Sometimes as they wake up from anesthesia and blood pressure increases to normal, a vessel may leak or a ligature may pop off resulting in hemorrhage, which may require either another surgery or if it occurs rapidly and severely, may result in death.
- 2) Furthermore, every vessel in the broad ligament (the structure that supports the uterus and ovaries) must also be ligated and if any are missed may leak and hemorrhage resulting in a similar outcome to #1 above.
- 3) The bitch shares 1/3 of her blood volume with the fetuses. While a small portion of that shared blood volume goes with the fetuses, a large amount is left within the uterine lumen or in the uterine wall in the placental attachment sites. This blood can be resorbed by the bitch over time to resupply her blood volume more quickly.
- 4) The rapid loss of blood resulting from removal of the uterus and its contents (described in #2 above) causes a marked drop in blood pressure during surgery which can result in cardiac or respiratory compromise or crisis during anesthesia, resulting in death.
- 5) Pregnancy is a thromboembolic state – this means that blood clots occur with greater frequency in pregnant and immediate post –partum bitches. All bitches, whether they have surgery or not are at increased risk for throwing clots, which can be life threatening if they go to the lungs or brain. Spaying, where multiple vessels are tied off and form clots at the ends where the ligatures are, will increase the risk of a clot dislodging and getting into the bloodstream. The most common deaths in the early postpartum bitch are following C-section spays.
- 6) Performing a spay at the time of C-section adds an additional 30 – 60 minutes of surgery time (depending on the size and body condition of the bitch) on to the procedure. This is time spent away from the puppies who should nurse the bitch as soon as possible to get energy stores up and colostrum ingested.

For the reasons stated above, I strongly recommend AGAINST spaying at the time of c-section unless the uterus must be removed because it is damaged or compromised.

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