

Laparoscopic Surgery at Intermountain Pet Hospital

Laparoscopy is a surgical technique using small diameter instruments and a video camera through small incisions (about the size of a pencil) to complete abdominal surgery. Laparoscopy reduces pain and tissue trauma and speeds up healing time. The camera also allows the surgeon to see all the organs, thus performing a virtual exploratory surgery within a body cavity (chest or abdomen) without a large incision.

In veterinary medicine, laparoscopy is used for multiple types of surgery: spays (ovarioectomy or ovariectomy), cryptorchid castration (removing testicle from abdomen), organ biopsies (sampling) in the abdomen and chest, stomach tacking to prevent stomach rotation in large breed dogs, and bladder surgery. The possibilities are almost endless.

The veterinarians at Intermountain Pet Hospital have extensive training and are equipped to perform laparoscopic procedures. We routinely perform all of the procedures listed above and we feel confident that your pet will have a much better surgical experience by using this technique.

What are the advantages of laparoscopic surgery?

- Visualization is markedly better and problems can be identified much earlier
- Tissue manipulation is much more refined and precise meaning less tissue trauma
- The procedure can be performed in 20 minutes in most cases
- Risk of suture reaction or closure failure is very low
- Patients recover quicker, return home quicker, and return to normal activity almost immediately.
- Research has shown that there is significantly less pain/discomfort.

In most cases at Intermountain Pet Hospital we perform ovariectomies (removal of ovaries only) instead of ovariohysterectomies (removal of ovaries and uterus). This technique is the norm in Europe, and research has shown that this is the procedure of choice for performing routine sterilization in female dogs. For some reason, veterinarians in the USA have been slow to grasp this knowledge. On occasion, if the uterus is diseased, it should be removed through a traditional surgical approach.

Why is a spay (ovariectomy) better at Intermountain Pet Hospital

- Ovariectomy itself is the procedure of choice over ovariohysterectomy as there is less tissue trauma meaning less pain and a quicker recovery. There is no difference long term, although early reports show there may be less urinary incontinence with ovariectomy, as the uterus is left in place.
- An IV catheter is placed and fluids are given to every patient under anesthesia.
- Only the best anesthetics are used. These are the same anesthetics that are used in human anesthesia.

- Every patient has a nurse assigned to monitor anesthesia until completely recovered from anesthesia.
- Patients are put on a ventilator to insure proper ventilation and oxygenation.
- Pre-emptive and post-surgical pain control is paramount at Intermountain Pet Hospital.
- We have invested in equipment to keep the body warm during surgery to protect the organs and decrease recovery time.

The picture below shows the small ports allowing a camera and instrument used to spay (remove the ovaries) of a Labrador Retriever. As you can see the incision is the size of a pencil in most cases. The knobby structure on the screen is the ovary that is to be removed. The surgeon is able to observe and manipulate the tissues by watching the large screens mounted on the surgery room walls.

All the equipment is sterile and the patient is draped while on the warmed surgery table.

