

Spaying and Hunting Ability

Spaying does not make a dog lose its hunting abilities.

Jon Geller, DVM

Q. My husband has a German Shorthaired Pointer, and I would like to have her spayed. Unfortunately, all my husband's friends are telling him that she will lose her hunting ability after she is spayed. I disagree, but he doesn't think I am right. What is your answer to this?

A. The effects of spaying dogs have been well studied. A spay surgery is an ovariectomy, in which the uterus and ovaries are removed. In general, you will see no significant changes in your dog after she is spayed. Due to the drastic change in production of progesterone and estrogen, there are some positive changes that can be expected. They are:

1. Inability to reproduce, or go through "heat" cycles
2. Protection against certain cancer, including mammary cancer, uterine cancer and ovarian cancer
3. Protection against uterine infection (pyometra) or endometriosis

Your dog will continue to enjoy hunting and other activities. You can reassure your husband that spaying your dog will provide many health benefits, without any significant downside.

Best,
Jon Geller, DVM

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