

Spayed Dogs Can Get Fat A frustrating study. (OP-ED Dr. Erik Johnson)

Background: There's a statistic that spaying **after** the first heat **DOUBLES** the chances of cancer in the breast line, over spaying **BEFORE** the first heat. Out of context, and horribly so, because the odds of mammary cancer in dogs spayed **before** the first heat is 1% and that **DOUBLES** to 2% if spayed **after** the first heat.

More background: A *different* study was run that showed that longevity and overall health is better in Rottweilers **not spayed at all**. The conclusion of the study was that spay shortened the dogs' lives. Idiots. The proper conclusion was that the Rotties got fat after spay, the owners didn't mess with it, and the dogs suffered poorer, shorter lives as a result of obesity **NOT THE SPAY**. Can you see where I'm going with this?

- **FACT:** Unspayed females are leaner.
- **FACT:** Spayed females are prone to obesity.

The study on the following page describes *differences* in how fat the dogs get after spay at different age-points. It also indicates that when you spay changes the odds of obesity. In summary: Inferences are made that the **age of spay has a metabolic impact**. This is not true. The facts are simple: That spayed dogs are prone to get fat. If they are spayed *after* their first year, they are eating **ADULT** dog food and less likely to fatten up.

When spayed *before* their first heat they are almost assuredly eating fattening **puppy** food. This accelerates the unfortunate weight gain suffered after spay. The study does not take into account the differences in caloric intake during the examined phases.

The study follows by saying that fat dogs *that are spayed* had 300% higher chance of orthopedic complications. 300% higher than **WHAT** group? This is why I don't read trade magazines for facts.

In either event, fat dogs (spayed or not) are DOOMED to orthopedic ailments.

Dogs lose 15% of their metabolic "juju" as soon as they are spayed*. This is just fine if you keep them exercised and cut their calories by 15%. The following years, they lose 15% of caloric requirement per annum, meaning that at **ten** years old they need **less than HALF** the calories (as little as 150% less calories *per pound*) than a < yearling dog**.

So what's the take away from this?

- With varying degrees of impact, the earlier you spay your dog the less chance it has of mammary cancer later in life.
- With varying degrees of impact, spaying causes a reduction in metabolic capacity (not interest, ability or energy for exercise and play) and obesity is a natural consequence **unless** the owners feed accordingly.
- Spay gets the blame for the obesity as if it's *inherent*. And the *timing* of the spay is questioned when it's really very simple; as well as irrelevant:
- To wit: Feed your dog moderately, per its caloric needs, and it won't get fat. Obesity is not an inevitable consequence of spay. A reduction in caloric-requirement IS.

*Not interest, ability or energy for exercise and play

**Here's the math: (Young dog requiring 1000 calories, old dog requiring 400. So: 400calories + 150% = 1000 calories.)



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Research update: Earlier age at spay/neuter a risk factor in obesity and orthopedic injuries

Epidemiologist Dr. Missy Simpson shares the first prospective research from the Morris Animal Foundation's Golden Retriever Lifetime Study.



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By [Portia Stewart, Editor, Team Channel Director](#), [Theresa L. Entriken, DVM](#)
VETTED

At [Fetch dvm360 conference](#) in Kansas City, Missy Simpson, DVM, PhD, epidemiologist for the Morris Animal Foundation's Golden Retriever Lifetime Study, presented "Gold-mining clinical insights from the Golden Retriever Lifetime Study—3,000+ dogs strong and six years along."

Solid Goldies

[The golden years.](#)

Simply golden: [A Golden Retriever Lifetime Study veterinary visit.](#)

[Golden retriever study](#) confronts heartbreak of cancer with unparalleled veterinary research effort.

Here are highlights:

About 30% of the dogs are overweight or obese based on a body condition score of six on a nine-point scale.

2,764 dogs were divided into four groups based on the age that gonadectomy was performed:

- 6 months or younger,
- more than 6 months to 1 year old,
- older than 1 year, and
- intact dogs.

Compared to intact dogs, dogs that underwent gonadectomy when they 1 year old or younger faced a two-times higher risk for overweight or obesity.

Dogs older than 1 year had a 40% increased risk for overweight or obesity. Further, Dr. Simpson shared that for every year older the dog was when gonadectomy occurred, it reduced the risk of overweight and obesity by 70%.

Another interesting point from the study: overweight or obese dogs that had undergone gonadectomy showed a 300% increased risk of chronic non-traumatic orthopedic injury (osteoarthritis, cranial cruciate ligament disease). Dr. Simpson says veterinarians should share with owners that if they keep their dogs lean, owners can reduce the risk of these orthopedic problems by almost half.

dvm360 Team Channel Director Portia Stewart caught up with Dr. Simpson to discuss these preliminary results, as well as how Morris Animal Foundation plans to make the raw data and samples from the GRLS available to researchers to mine for future insights, in this video: