Traditional vs Laparoscopic Spey

At Vet HQ we have the equipment and ability to do laparoscopic (key hole) speys as an alternative to the traditional spey procedure. In this article I will explain the difference between these two options as well as go through the pros and cons of each that might be relevant to your pet.

Traditional Spey

The **traditional spey** is the most commonly performed method and has been safely used in veterinary medicine for decades. It involves a surgical incision along the underside of the abdomen, followed by surgical removal of both the ovaries and uterus. The length of the incision required varies with the size and shape of the pet.

Pros	Cons
• Less expensive than a laparoscopic spey. • Is suitable for all dogs & cats and conditions, including small dogs, pets on heat, pregnant pets and pets with uterine disease. • Greater ability to deal with complications or unexpected findings due to better access to all the organs. • Often a shorter anaesthetic time	• A larger incision is required to allow access to the abdomen. • As a result of a large incision, a longer period of exercise restriction post-surgery is usually required. • The surgeon has to manually handle organs and tissue resulting in more tissue stretching and inflammation. This can result in a longer recovery time, compared to a laparoscopic spey.

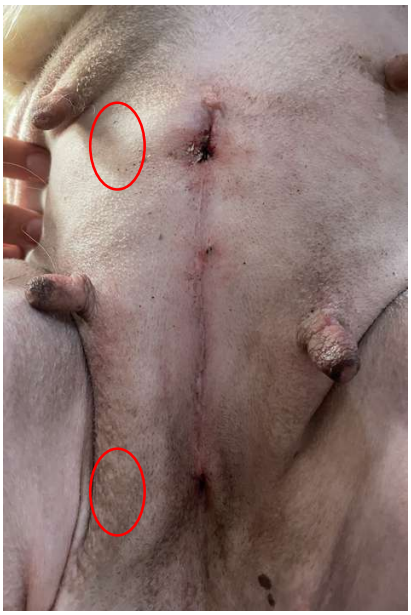
Laparoscopic Spey

A **laparoscopic spey (keyhole spey)** involves using advanced equipment to perform surgery through two small incisions on the underside of the abdomen, guided by a camera, which is inserted via one of these incisions. To allow better visualisation of the organs carbon dioxide gas is used to inflate the abdomen. This gas is removed at the end of the procedure before the patient wakes up. During this procedure, only the ovaries are removed. Even though the patient will still have a uterus, the patient won't be able to get pregnant and will not have heat cycles.

Pros	Cons
• Smaller incision, resulting in less risk of wound breakdown and lower infection risk. • Less organ and tissue handling resulting in a smoother & quicker recovery. • There is the option in deep chested breeds to add in a gastropexy (a procedure involving attaching the stomach to the abdominal wall to prevent a twisted stomach, which can be lethal without emergency surgery). • Reduced visible scarring	• Higher cost compared to a traditional spey. • The benefits are less relevant for cats and small dogs (less than 10kg) as the incisions are already small for these smaller patients. In dogs the bigger the dog, the bigger the benefits of a laparoscopic procedure. • If there is any unexpected anatomy or findings, there is a chance that the procedure may have to be converted to a traditional spey method to allow for better visualisation. • Anaesthetic time can be longer than a traditional spey.

Please note that a laparoscopic spey does have multiple benefits surrounding incision size and a quicker recovery. However, for cats and small dogs less than 10kg these benefits are much less, as these patients already have much smaller incisions than larger dogs. When it comes to laparoscopic speys, the larger the dog, the larger the benefits.

Comparison



Laparoscopic Spey Wound

Large dog traditional spey wound

Small dog traditional spey wound

Which option is best for my pet?

It is important to emphasise that both a traditional and laparoscopic spey are safe and effective options for desexing female pets. There is no inferior procedure and a traditional spey is still the most widely used method worldwide. There are many factors to consider when deciding on which method is best for your pet, including; age, health status, size and available finance. Therefore, if you have any questions or concerns about which option may be best for your pet, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us.

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