

THE BIG FIX: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Poi Dogs & Popoki (PDP) offers low-cost, high quality spay/neuter surgery on our Mobile Spay/Neuter unit, The Big Fix, which travels to communities across Oahu. Recognizing that many of the most serious overpopulation and animal health crises arise in neighborhoods with limited access to veterinary care and pet wellness resources, PDP brings subsidized spay/neuter services directly to communities that need that need the most help.

See our website for our upcoming dates and locations. www.poidogsandpopoki.org

Does my cat or dog qualify for surgery on a The Big Fix?

PDP strives to make spay/neuter accessible and affordable for all of Oahu's residents but especially those in underserved communities. There are no income requirements to use The Big Fix. But low-income pet owners with proof of public assistance such as Medicaid, disability, or EBT may qualify for subsidized or reduced-fee spay/neuter services for their cat or dog. Photo identification must match proof of public assistance.

How much does it cost to spay or neuter my pet?

PDP works with pet owners to cover costs including payment plans for families with multiple pets, caregivers, rescue groups and people interesting in Trap-Neuter-Return options for feral cat management.

Female Pet Cats: \$50

Male Pet Cats: \$40

Feral Cats: \$25

Female Dogs: \$150

Male Dogs: \$125

This fee includes the surgical procedure, microchip identification, e-collar (cone for the head) and pain medication.

What services are provided for pets or feral cats?

- Spay or neuter surgery
- Small tattoo, placed close to the incision site when an animal is spayed/neutered. Tattoos let shelters and veterinarians easily identify that an animal has already been spayed/neutered. This is especially important for female animals, as presence of a tattoo can help the animal avoid undergoing an unnecessary surgery in the future.
- Microchip identification
- 3 to 4 days of pain medications (Rimadyl) for dogs and injectable pain meds for cats.

- Ear will be notched for all feral cats to ensure that they will not be trapped again in the future.

Why is The Big Fix more affordable than a private vet? Does this affect the quality of the surgery?

The Big Fix is a state of the art mobile unit designed specifically for spay and neuter services for cats and dogs. It was purchased with a city grant and is operated and maintained by Poi Dogs and Popoki, a local nonprofit. Operation costs are kept to a minimum by the following:

- Minimizing paid staff by relying on volunteer support for administrative activities.
- Ensuring a productive use of inventory by focusing on only spay and neuter services.
- Using donations to subsidize the cost of equipment and supplies
- Raising additional funds through special events and grant writing to assist with other operational costs
- Maintaining an efficient schedule so that we are able to have the largest impact on the community

The Big Fix is also staffed by highly experienced and educated workforce that prides themselves on high quality medicine and community service. We provide continuing education for our key staff to ensure that we are offering the most up to date medical practices. The focus of our program is low cost, high quality spay and neuter services to the public. It is intended for healthy animals and routine spay and neuter services. We offer presurgical bloodwork

Do I need vaccinations or a pre-surgical exam for The Big Fix?

Although they are highly recommended, we do not require vaccinations, heartworm negative status, or flea/tick prevention to participate with The Big Fix. To serve all communities equally, we offer our services to animals in good apparent health and temperament. We do recommend vaccines, heartworm prevention, flea/tick prevention and offer these services on The Big Fix. Please look at our website under Wellness to view services and prices. (<https://www.poidogsandpopoki.org/wellness-program.html>) We do not provide a pre-surgical appointment. Owners are required to fill out a questionnaire for each patient. The questionnaire regarding the medical history of the patient, as well as the physical exam (temperature, pulse, respiratory, general appearance and mucus membrane) is serviced by a veterinary technician. The veterinarian is alerted to any abnormalities and they determine if the patient is an acceptable candidate for The Big Fix.

Will my pet receive a post-surgery recheck or need sutures (stitches) removed?

We do not provide post-surgery rechecks on patients having a normal recovery. We do have a technician on call for the purpose of post-operative questions or concerns. This number will be listed on discharge instructions. If the patient is deemed to be having a post-operative complication, then they may be referred to a full-service veterinarian for follow up care. We use a dissolvable suture that will break down over a month. These sutures are buried and will not be seen post operatively. There is more than one layer of suture for the procedure and tissue glue is applied at the skin layer as added protection. Do not apply an ointment to a normal healing surgical area or have sutures removed. Any exceptions will be noted and discussed with an owner at discharge.

Which animals will The Big Fix accept for surgery?

All animals with good temperament will have a general exam to determine if they appear healthy and can undergo surgery aboard the mobile unit. The Big Fix Spay/Neuter Clinics generally accept:

- healthy dogs and cats
- puppies and kittens who are at least eight weeks old and weigh at least two pounds
- female dogs in heat
- female cats in heat
- pregnant cats and dogs, depending on the health of the animal and term of pregnancy
- large dogs (certain giant breeds may not be accepted)
- Cryptorchid (animals having either one or neither testicle descended)

What if my pet is in heat?

The Big Fix will perform the spay surgery while the pet is in heat, however, it will be more complex and the surgeon will have to be extra skilled to prevent complications. During the heat cycle, the female's uterus and ovaries will be swollen, so the spaying surgery will be more complicated and the bleeding during surgery will be more intensive. The Big Fix surgeons are some of the most competent on the island and many are experienced in high volume spay and neuter. A large number of females that we spay are in heat at surgery time. We advise owners to pay extra attention to pets while they recover at home.

Which animals will The Big Fix NOT accept for surgery?

Mobile Spay/Neuter Clinics will NOT accept:

- guinea pigs, chinchillas, rabbits, or any animal who is not a cat or dog
- unhealthy animals or those with contagious illnesses (animals should not be coughing or sneezing, and should not have watery eyes, runny noses, mange, or ringworm)
- animals with mammary, testicular or scrotal tumors as they will need additional care, and potential procedures that are not provided in our program.

Certain animals may be accepted on a case by case basis, depending on the outcome of the veterinary examination:

- female dogs and cats who are nursing puppies and kittens (it is ideal to wait to spay a mother until one month after she weans her litter)
- If an animal is aggressive it may be declined for the safety of the pet, staff and volunteers
- Animals with known medical conditions that may cause them to be an anesthetic risk may be declined for services and would be recommended to seek a full service veterinary hospital for follow up care

How do I schedule an appointment for The Big Fix?

The Big Fix is scheduled by appointment to ensure that we will have enough staffing, space, and

supplies to provide spay and neuter services for that clinic. We ask that clients bring only the animals that they have scheduled for that clinic to ensure this. You will receive an email confirmation with paperwork to print and bring with you on the day of surgery.

To schedule an appointment, please go to the website to view the monthly clinic schedule of dates and locations. Use the online scheduling option to secure your appointment.

How should I prepare my pet(s) for spay/neuter surgery?

Please read through the Canine/Feline Packets for details/requirements for the day of surgery.

What should I bring with me when my pet is admitted to The Big Fix?

- Bring proof of public assistance and photo identification showing you are 18 years of age or older
- If transporting a pet for someone who is disabled or elderly, bring that person's proof of public assistance and photo identification
- Payment is requested at pet drop off - cash, check, or credit card

What occurs when I arrive at the site of The Big Fix?

- You will have received a confirmation email within 48 hours of the clinic with instructions for a drop off time for your pet. Dogs are dropped off between 8 and 9 am, or 1 and 2 pm. Pet cats are dropped off at 8 am. Feral cats are dropped off at 9 am. A PDP representative will be on site to assist with animal check-in. Forms are sent out ahead of time to aid in the check-in process, but please be patient. All animals respond differently.
- If there are aggressive or excitable pets, it may slow down the check in process.
- Pick up for pets will vary in accordance to how they recover from surgery. We will call the number provided for us at check in for a pick up time. We are unable to house pets for extended hours past their pick up time as we have limited space on our unit.
- We do not offer drop off or pick up services and cannot house any pets overnight.
- While waiting, please be courteous and considerate of neighbors, fellow clients, and private property.

How should I care for my pet after surgery?

When your dog or cat is discharged from The Big Fix we will provide you with instructions for post-operative care. You can also download them from our website:

www.poidogsandpopoki.org.

Should we let our female have one litter before spaying her?

No. Females should be spayed before the first heat which usually occurs at 5-6 months of age.

We stress before since a female can become pregnant at that age and she is in no way ready for it. Pregnancy will place a great strain on the system, often resulting in birth defects, and she may not be able to nurse, resulting in seriously malnourished offspring. In addition, early

spaying prevents later problems, including mammary tumors, uterine infections, and uterine tumors. If a female is allowed to go through a heat before spaying, those problems may still arise later in life because estrogen is stored in the system as a result of the heat.

How old should my pet be before the surgery?

Kittens as young as 8 weeks old and 2 pounds, or puppies as young as 12 weeks, can have the surgery with no ill effects. If females are spayed before their first heat cycle (which usually occurs when they are five to six months old), breast cancer can be almost completely prevented.

Younger pets also recover more quickly from the surgery and experience less pain following surgery than older pets. In short – the sooner the better.

Is the surgery painful?

Yes, the surgery is painful. However, we provide all pets with very effective injectable pain medication that lasts 24 hours after surgery, and provide additional take-home pain medication for dogs. Heat cycles, pregnancy and birthing are also painful and will be prevented with spaying your pet.

My pet just had a litter. When can I spay her?

We recommend spaying dogs when their puppies are 5 weeks old and can be away from their mom for the day. We recommend cats get spayed when their kittens are 5 weeks old as well. However, if you have an outdoor cat or a cat that you think may not be able to wait that long, we can spay them sooner. This is sometimes necessary because they can come back into heat and get pregnant while still nursing their kittens. It is okay for the moms to go back to nursing after her spay but please let the vet staff know at check-in if you have a nursing mom.

What does the tattoo look like and where is it on my pet?

The tattoo is 1/2 to 1 inch long, straight line in green ink located right by the surgical incision. It will fade a little after the skin heals.

Why does The Big Fix tattoo pets?

The tattoo program was started so that we comply with the highest standards of the Spay/Neuter Task Force guidelines. These guidelines were established to protect our wonderful patients and ensure that they are treated safely and effectively. The tattoo is meant to be a permanent identification that your pet has been spayed or neutered.

Can't veterinarians tell if my pet is spayed or neutered without the tattoo?

Sometimes not however, this would only be an issue if your pet were lost or in a shelter without it's medical history. With newer dissolvable suture materials, there are no stitches to feel in a female's belly to indicate she was already spayed and if they have surgery at a young age, there is no scar to see. In male dogs, if you can't see or feel a scar, there is a possibility that the dog still has testicles but they never dropped into the scrotal sac (cryptorchid). The doctor would open the male dog up (like a spay) to look for those testicles, a painful and unnecessary surgery that could have been prevented with a permanent identifying mark.

Benefits of Spay/Neuter

Benefits of Spaying (females):

- No heat cycles, therefore males will not be attracted
- Less desire to roam
- Risk of mammary gland tumors, ovarian and/or uterine cancer is reduced or eliminated, especially if done before the first heat cycle
- Reduces number of unwanted cats/kittens/dogs/puppies
- Helps dogs and cats live longer, healthier lives
- Eliminates possibility of pyometra (infected uterus) which is a very expensive, life threatening condition

Benefits of Neutering (males):

- Reduces or eliminates risk of spraying and marking
- Less desire to roam, therefore less likely to be injured in fights or auto accidents
- Risk of testicular cancer is eliminated, and decreases incidence of prostate disease
- Reduces number of unwanted cats/kittens/dogs/puppies
- Decreases aggressive behavior, including dog bites
- Helps dogs and cats live longer, healthier lives

Top 3 Reasons to Spay and Neuter

- It helps to reduce companion animal overpopulation and euthanasia. Most countries have a surplus of companion animals and are forced to euthanize or disregard their great suffering. Hawaii is no different. The surplus is in the millions in the United States. Cats are 45 times as prolific, and dogs 15 times as prolific, as humans. They do not need our help to expand their numbers; they need our help to reduce their numbers until there are good homes for them all.
- Sterilization of your cat or dog will increase his/her chance of a longer and healthier life. Altering your canine friend will increase his life an average of 1 to 3 years, felines, 3 to 5 years. Altered animals have a very low to no risk of mammary gland tumors/cancer, prostate cancer, perianal tumors, pyometra, and uterine, ovarian and testicular cancers.
- Sterilizing your cat/dog makes him/her a better pet, reducing his/her urge to roam and decreasing the risk of contracting diseases or getting hurt as they roam. Surveys indicate that as many as 85% of dogs hit by cars are unaltered. Intact male cats living outside have been shown to live on average less than two years. Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) is spread by bites and intact cats fight a great deal more than altered cats.

Additional Benefits:

- It's the law! It is unlawful for a cat to be at large unless it has been sterilized and carries identification (microchip or tag).
- Owners with sterilized dogs receive a reduced fee when licensing their dogs with the City & County of Honolulu.