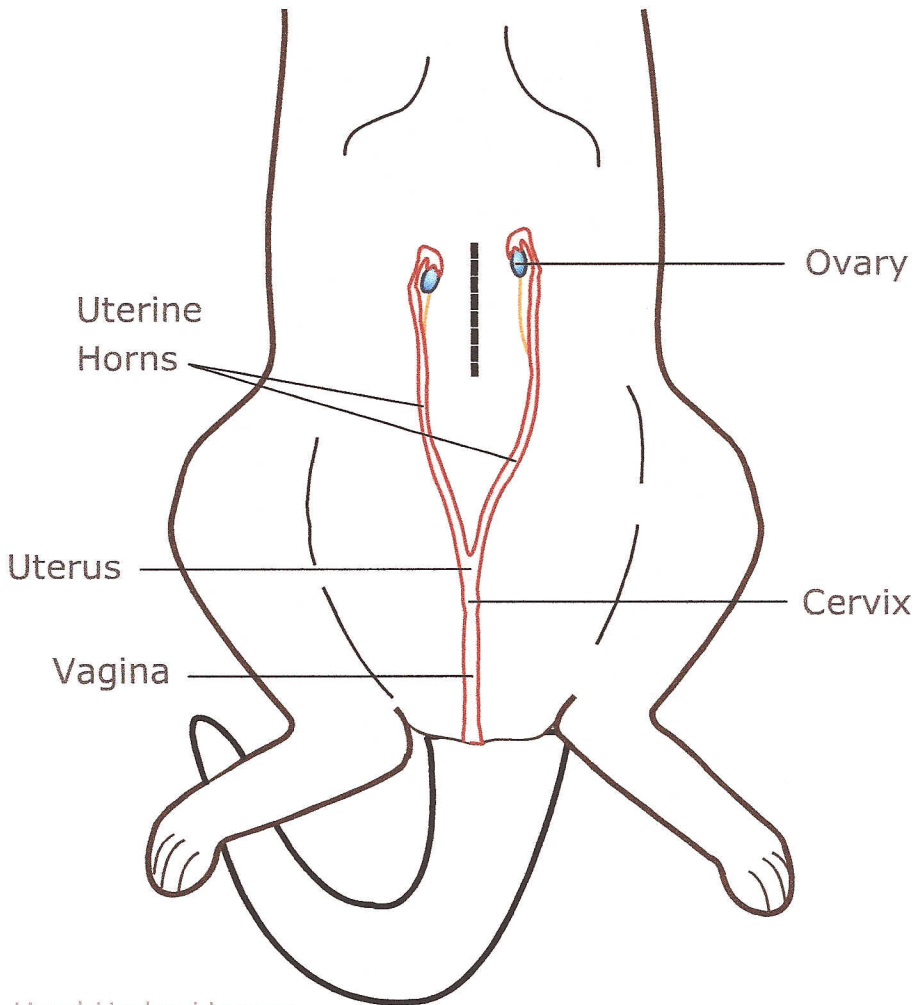


Spay - Cat: Ventrodorsal view of cat showing position of ovariohysterectomy incision.



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The vagina, uterus and ovaries form the reproductive tract of the female cat or queen. The paired ovaries are located deep in the abdomen near the kidneys. The uterus in the cat is divided into a body and two horns. In pregnancy, kittens develop in the uterine horns. Pregnancy lasts for 63 days on average. Cats are seasonally polyestrous, meaning that they have multiple heat cycles during breeding season. For feral queens, breeding season occurs from late winter through early fall in northern climates, but indoor housecats may cycle all year round. A mature female cat will continue to have estrus cycles until she mates with a male. Ovariohysterectomy is the scientific term for the surgical procedure commonly called a 'spay'. In this major abdominal surgery, both ovaries and the uterine body and horns are removed, completely sterilizing the cat and stopping her heat cycles. Further information on this subject can be found in our Client Education Series Handouts.