

A Spayed Rabbit Exhibits The Aggressive Behavior Of An Unspayed Rabbit

What should be done when a spayed rabbit shows the aggressive behavior of an unspayed rabbit?

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Q: I have a 1-year-old, female rabbit. When she started to show aggressive behavior six months ago, we understood that she was sexually mature and took her to the veterinarian to be neutered. The veterinarian was a rabbit expert, and he operated on her so well that she recovered in two days.

We did not have any problems until a few days ago. We don't know what happened. She was locked in her room for four to five hours, and when we let her free, she went nuts. Ever since that moment, she is making strange noises like growling. She humps with our arms and without any reason she bites — a very hard bite! Whenever she sees any of the house-people she jumps over, circles our feet and follows us everywhere we go. She never seems asleep, because she is always alert. Furthermore, she was perfectly litter-trained, but now she goes everywhere in the house.

It's been more than a week since this started. We took her to the veterinarian, who said we should wait. But each day she gets even more aggressive. Why do you think this is happening? I'm desperately sad for my little angel, please help me and give some advice.

A: When a rabbit is spayed, it takes about two weeks for it to recover fully from the surgery and even longer for the effects of the hormones to be out of the rabbit's system. After being spayed, a rabbit should be confined to an exercise pen for about a week so it can't jump up on things or run around too much. It is also important to ask the veterinarian for take-home pain medicine.

It sounds like your rabbit is exhibiting the behavior of an unspayed rabbit, which is probably because her hormones haven't yet died down after the surgery. Check with your veterinarian to make sure your rabbit's ovaries were removed completely.

As for not using the litter box, set up your rabbit in an exercise pen that's 4 by 4 feet or bigger. Put a nice big litter box in there with rabbit-safe litter, and pile it full of hay such as timothy or oat. If your rabbit happens to poop outside the litter box, sweep up the poops and put them in the litter box. Once your rabbit stops pooping outside the litter box (this could take about four to five days), let her out of her pen to run around a rabbit-proofed room, leaving the pen open so she can go back in to use the litter box. Add another litter box outside the pen for your rabbit to use too.

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