

Information Sheet

Neutering cats

Ovario-hysterectomy (spaying)

An ovario-hysterectomy is the medical term for spaying or neutering female cats. The procedure consists of the surgical removal of the ovaries and the uterus. Surgery can be performed at any age but is best done at 6 months, at an age before the cat comes into season for the first time.

Reasons for ...

1. There will be no more heat periods.
2. She will be unable to get pregnant - so there will be no unwanted kittens.
3. The risk of her getting a potentially life-threatening uterine infection (pyometra) is removed. This is common to older cats.
4. The chances of her suffering from hormone induced mammary (breast) cancer can be reduced.

Frequently asked questions

1. *'Will it make my cat fat and lazy?'* No. Obesity is due to excessive calorie intake. Weight can be controlled with proper feeding and exercise.
2. *'Will it change her disposition, personality or intelligence?'* Cats' personalities do not fully develop until 1 year of age. If there is a personality change after spaying at an early age, it would have occurred without surgery.
3. *'Shouldn't my cat have a litter first?'* No. There is no advantage in allowing your cat to have a litter of kittens.

Castration of the cat

Castration is the surgical removal of the testicles. The operation may be performed on any male cat from 6 months onwards. There is no evidence that neutering at an early age results in obesity, bladder infections or stunted growth.

Reasons for ...

1. Reduction of the strong, offensive odour of the urine.
2. Reduction of the desire to stray or roam.
3. Reduction in aggressive behaviour.
4. Reduction of territorial marking - spraying urine to mark territory.
5. Reduction of territorial fighting - so reducing the risk of Feline Leukaemia.
6. Reduction of the cat population - prevention of unwanted kittens.

Reasons against ...

All general anaesthetics involve some risks. The risk is smaller in young, fit animals than in older cats.

