



MANOR
VETERINARY CLINIC

Neutering your cat



Sterilisation, castration and spaying - why and when

Sadly, a large number of kittens are born every year that are unable to find good homes and as a result, many healthy cats may live as strays or be destroyed. Having your pet neutered will not only help to reduce these numbers, it is also one of the simple and practical ways to safeguard their health and welfare.

What does neutering involve?

Both castration in the male cat (to remove the testicles) and spaying in the female cat (to remove the uterus (womb) and ovaries), are operations which require a general anaesthetic. Although there is always a risk with any anaesthetic or surgery, these are operations that are the most frequently carried out by vets and there is little chance of anything going wrong if your animal is fit and healthy. Your pet should be starved from the night before to reduce anaesthetic risks further. Your pet should be ready to return home on the same day as the surgery, as soon as the anaesthetic has worn off. You will notice some shaved patches on the fur from the operation and catheter site. They should be kept indoors until the wound has healed which can be 10-14 days for female cats

What are the benefits of neutering?

Females

A normal cat will come in to season three or four times a year and will stay in season unless mated. Cats can become sexually mature from 4 months of age and only ovulate when they are mated so may become pregnant very easily.

The behaviour of a female cat in season can change very markedly - she may become more nervous and try to hide away or become clingy and seek constant attention. She will advertise herself to potential mates by spraying urine around the house and may roll around on the floor and call. It is important to keep an intact female securely indoors to prevent an unwanted litter of kittens as they can try to escape or tomcats may try force their way in.

Cats can also have litters in close succession throughout life. Raising a litter takes a lot out of a cat and having several litters is likely to reduce a cat's life expectancy.

There is a risk of infection of the uterus (pyometra) if she is not neutered or bred from and mammary (breast) cancer is more common in un-neutered cats.

Males

Intact tomcats patrol a large area in search of females. A cat who wanders is more likely to be involved in a car accident or become involved with fights with other males. Fighting can lead to physical injuries, abscesses and infections with dangerous viruses such as the Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV, which is like feline AIDS) as these are spread by bites.

Tomcats also mark their territory, which includes parts of your house, with urine. This has a very powerful and pungent smell which is often difficult to get rid of.

Are there any problems or side effects?

All operations that require a general anaesthetic involve a certain amount of risk and on rare occasions there may be complications after the operation. Known complications include excessive bleeding during the operation (in which case intravenous fluids will be administered) or problems with the wound site afterwards. It is important that your cat does not lick or chew at the wound site as this can lead to it opening up or becoming infected. However, complications are extremely rare.

The main side effect of neutering is that it reduces energy requirements and neutered male cats will take less exercise. It is important to monitor your cat's weight after neutering and reduce the amount of food they are given to avoid weight gain.

Most owners find that any changes in their cat's personality are positive as many neutered cats become more affectionate and playful.

In some cats (those with dark points such as Siamese or Birman) the patch of clipped fur may grow back a dark colour although this is usually resolved by the next moult. The vet may decide to do a midline spay in these cats instead of making the incision on the side (flank).

When should my cat be neutered?

We recommend neutering both male and female cats at around 5-6 months old and in some circumstances it may be as early as 4 months. Castrating a male cat before he reaches sexual maturity will reduce the likelihood of him urine marking or fighting. There is no evidence that early neutering harms a cat's later health and physical development.

There is no upper age limit for neutering your cat. You may wish to neuter your cat if you acquire them as an adult or to neuter them once they have retired as a breeding animal. Tomcats can be neutered later on in life which may reduce antisocial behaviour such as spraying. However, it should be remembered that the older the male is, the more likely they will continue to show the less desirable behavioural traits of a tomcat.

If your cat has just had a litter, she can be neutered about 3-4 weeks after the kittens have been weaned. If your cat is in season or even in early pregnancy she can still be spayed but the vet may decide to make the incision along the midline instead of the flank.

It is an old wives' tale that a cat needs to have a litter of kittens. What your pet doesn't know she won't miss and neutering will save you the trouble and expense of looking after a pregnant cat, rearing a litter and finding homes for the kittens.

How much does neutering cost?

Please ask us for an estimate, as the prices for neutering vary with the age of the pet and site of the incision.

**If you have any questions about neutering,
please speak to a nurse or vet today.**



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www.manorveterinaryclinic.co.uk



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