

# why spay or neuter your cat?

## *basic feline health*

Altering your cat removes the ability to reproduce and helps ensure a longer, healthier life.

### **Spaying or neutering:**

Males are neutered, meaning the testicles are removed. This is a fairly easy procedure. Male cats usually go home the same day and return to regular activities the following day.

Females are spayed, which removes their ovaries. Surgery is a little more involved for females, since an incision is made in their abdomen. But females also usually come home the same day and have somewhat limited activity for two or three days until the stitches start to heal. Females should be spayed before their first heat, which can occur as early as four months old.

### **Why spay or neuter:**

Relieve your cat from the sexual frustration associated with the desire to breed. They have no emotional need to breed. You may resist the idea of altering your cat, but there are many benefits.

### **Prevent pet overpopulation:**

There are thousands of animals in shelters and rescues across the country that are waiting for someone to adopt them. Spaying or neutering your pet helps prevent unwanted litters of kittens and gives animals at shelters and rescues a better chance of finding their forever home. Cats breed more often than dogs, producing up to four litters a year. Just one litter of six can multiply in six years to over 420,000 cats! During kitten season (spring and summer) the animal shelters take in over 400 unwanted kittens each month, often alongside their mothers.



Developed with and approved by a qualified veterinarian.

Unwanted cats cannot just be set free to fend for themselves. The feral cats you see down at the beach or around warehouses have to be cared for by someone to survive. If you think you just want an outdoor cat, the cat won't be around long if not altered. Male cats will roam for miles looking for females. An outdoor cat's life span is only about three years.

#### **Less behavior problems:**

Neutered males are less likely to mark their territory. Spraying is smelly, messy and offensive to everyone except the cat. It is easier to prevent spraying by early neutering than to cure your cat of this behavior when he is older and the habit is formed. Females in heat are equally offensive. They will try to scratch through window screens and howl endlessly.

#### **Altered cats are less aggressive:**

Unaltered cats tend to be more territorial and get into more altercations than their spayed/neutered counterparts. They also tend to be more independent, harder to handle and less friendly when left intact.

#### **Better health:**

Females are at risk for mammary or uterine cancer. A nursing mother can get mastitis. Males can get testicular or prostate cancer. And the above-mentioned fights can cost hundreds of dollars in veterinary bills.

#### **Common objections:**

##### **"Altering makes them fat and lazy."**

Eating too much is what makes them fat and lazy, not spaying or neutering. Your cat will be healthier and live longer when altered.

##### **"I want my kids to experience the miracle of birth."**

Because of the problem with pet overpopulation and the high number of animals in shelters, this isn't a very good reason to let your cat procreate. Many births occur at night and in seclusion, so witnessing the event may not happen. It is probably more important to teach children about pet responsibility.

After kittens are born, you are responsible for finding homes for them all, not just one you may decide to keep. Because cats can breed so often, you will run out of people to give them to after the first few litters. Giving them away at the grocery store does not ensure a good home. Also, each home you find means one less home for the cats in shelters that need good homes.

##### **"My cat's too old."**

They are almost never too old for spay/neuter surgery. Unless your veterinarian finds a health reason, go ahead and have it done. You could combine it with another procedure like teeth cleaning to reduce downtime and possibly expense.

#### **Where to get your pet spayed or neutered:**

##### **Contact your local Petco:**

Your local Petco will be able to provide you with names of clinics near you.

##### **Contact your veterinarian:**

Your veterinarian may be able to work out financing options for you. Remember, spaying or neutering is a one-time cost with a lifetime of benefits.

##### **Contact your local animal shelter:**

They may operate a clinic or be able to provide you recommendations for low-cost spay/neuter clinics that are available in your community.

