



Why it's important to spay/neuter your cat

The most important health decision you can make as a cat guardian is to spay or neuter your cat.

What is spaying and neutering?

Spaying and neutering are safe surgical procedures performed by a veterinarian to prevent pets from reproducing. In a female animal, spaying consists of removing the uterus and ovaries. For a male animal, neutering involves the removal of the testicles. Sterilization, fixing, and altering are also common terms for spay and neuter. Spay/neuter is the most humane and effective method for reducing the number of homeless cats and also provides cats with significant health and behavioral benefits.

What are the benefits?

Your cat will live a longer, healthier life. For female cats, spaying helps prevent uterine infections and breast cancer, which is fatal in 90% of cats. Spaying your cat before her first heat offers the best protection from these diseases. For male cats, if done before six months of age, neutering prevents testicular cancer.



Your spayed female won't go into heat. While cycles can vary, female felines usually go into heat lasting seven to 10 days every three weeks during breeding season. In an effort to advertise for mates, they'll yowl and urinate more frequently—sometimes in all over the house!

Your neutered male will be better behaved. Unneutered cats may mark their territory by spraying strong-smelling urine all over the house. Neutered cats focus their attention on their human families, and many aggression problems can be avoided by early neutering.

It is highly cost-effective. The cost of your cat's spay/neuter surgery is a lot less than the cost of having and caring for a litter, such as veterinarian exams, vaccinations, and food.

Fewer stray and abandoned cats. Every time a litter is born, it lowers the chance that others will be adopted because competition for homes increases. Kittens who aren't adopted grow up to be homeless adult cats suffering on the streets or brought into shelters and killed. But with spay/neuter, fewer kittens are born, competition for homes is reduced, there is less suffering for stray and abandoned cats, and lives are saved through prevention.

When should a cat be spayed/neutered?

Most unintentional litters happen because people waited too long to have the surgery done. The recommended age for cats is five months and older.

How can I do my part and be a responsible cat guardian?

Schedule a spay/neuter for your cat at your local vet. Ensure your cat also gets an ear tattoo or microchip, so they can be located if they go missing. It's also a good idea to have them wear a collar with an ID tag with their name and your phone number.

I need financial help to get my cat spayed/neutered. Who can help me?

You can apply for funding assistance for spay/neuter by contacting the Surrey Community Cat Coalition at surreycats@shaw.ca.

5 Myths about Spay/Neuter

1. Only females need to be spayed. This is not true. The reproduction process takes two, and if your male is not neutered, he can easily find a female mate, either a stray or a pet whose owners have not yet taken the responsibility of spaying her. You may not be directly affected if your male pet is allowed to breed, but your actions—or lack thereof—will contribute to the problem of pet overpopulation.

2. Neutering will affect a cat's personality. The only hormone affected by the surgery is testosterone, which causes male animals to roam and protect or mark their territory. Males will be less aggressive and both males and females will be easier to manage when they are neutered. They will be more sociable and more likely to get along well with other animals and will be less likely to roam.

3. Cats become fat, lazy, and unhealthy when neutered. Cats become fat, lazy, and unhealthy from overeating and lack of exercise. It has nothing to do with neutering. In fact, neutering allows for better health, longer life, reduces the risk of infection and cancer in the reproductive system.

4. A female cat will benefit from having a litter. Female cats do not actually benefit from having a litter before they are spayed. Having a litter can put a cat's life at risk from complications that may arise from giving birth, and looking after a litter is very time-consuming and expensive. A female cat's heat cycle can last seven to 10 days and can occur every few weeks.

5. Children should be given the opportunity to learn about the birthing process and to take care of young animals. Your cat doesn't need to have kittens for your children to learn about the miracle of creating life. Letting your pet produce offspring you have no intention of keeping is not a good lesson for your children—especially when so many unwanted animals end up in shelters. There are lots of books and videos available to teach your children about birth in a more responsible way. It is a better life lesson to teach your kids to be responsible pet owners and spay or neuter their pets.

Source: Canadian Federation of Humane Societies