



## Neutering your **kitten...**

A female cat can get pregnant from 5 months of age, so it is best not to let her outside until after she has been neutered at around 6 months of age. Unneutered female cats can come into season by 6 months of age.

Male and female kittens can be neutered from about the age of 6 months. Neutering offers a number of advantages, especially if performed at an early stage.

### **Why should I neuter my kitten?**

#### **Male cats**

Following puberty, around 8-9 months old, the male cat develops a number of less desirable behaviour changes.

He will become territorial and may start to mark his territory (often the house) by spraying urine. He will start to enlarge his territory by straying ever further from the house, particularly at night. It is for this reason that many cats involved in road accidents are unneutered males. By increasing his territory he will come into contact with other cats and so fight for dominance. Inflicted fight wounds can result in severe infections and abscesses.

Since diseases such as feline leukaemia and feline AIDS, that cause illness and some cancers, are spread through bites it comes as no surprise to find that those cats most commonly affected are unneutered tomcats.

If your male kitten is neutered he is less likely to wander, which reduces the chances of him becoming lost etc... and making him more of a companion pet staying closer to home.

Finally, neutering prevents the siring of often unwanted kittens.

#### **Female cats**

They can be neutered (spayed) from 6 months old. Spaying your female kitten has several advantages. The most obvious is the prevention of unwanted litters.

Once puberty is reached at approximately 7 months old, the queen (female cat) will start calling for about a week in every 2-3 weeks during most of the year until she is mated.

During calling she may display certain behaviours, which often consist of loud and persistent crying and frequent rubbing and rolling on the floor (as if in pain).

Such behaviour and her scent will attract potential Romeos from miles around who will sit for days outside your house in the hope of meeting your little lady!

Once she is spayed, this will all stop. Spaying also removes the risk of uterine infection and may reduce the future risk of breast cancer.

It is also known, that if your male or female cat is neutered, they tend to become better natured as a pet and have fewer behavioural problems.

#### **What does the operation involve?**

Both males and females will come into the veterinary surgery as a day patient. You will be able to drop them off early on the day of the operation. We ask that they are starved from the night before.

They will be given a premedication injection soon after you leave them. This will relax them and make them a little sleepy. Your cat will have a general anaesthetic and be taken into theatre for the operation. A veterinary nurse will monitor their anaesthetic at all times. The veterinary surgeon will perform the operation.

A male cat has both testes removed through a very small incision in the scrotum. There will not be any stitches to remove.

A female cat has a square patch of hair shaved from her side. This has to be done to ensure the operation is as sterile as possible. Her incision is relatively small and both the ovaries and the uterus are removed. She may have stitches in the skin. Your vet will advise when he wishes to see your cat again post-operatively.

In certain pedigree breeds of cat e.g. Siamese, Birman, the hair that is shaved may grow back a slightly darker colour. This darker patch may grow out with the following moult as hair is replaced, but if you are concerned by this, we can spay your female midline (under the tummy) so that the patch is not noticeable.

#### **Pregnancy in cats**

A female cat can get pregnant from 5 months of age, so it is best not to let her outside until after she has been neutered at around 6 months of age. If this is not done she will come into season around this time.

Pregnancy lasts for around nine weeks and the average size of a litter is 4-5 kittens. A queen can come back into season when these kittens are about 6 weeks old, so you can see that it is very important to get her spayed to prevent unwanted litters.