

If you are not intending to use your cat for breeding, neutering should be considered at five to six months of age for the following reasons:

Castration of Toms:

The castration operation involves a general anaesthetic with removal of both testicles via an incision over each scrotal sac:

- **Prevent unwanted kittens** - there are unfortunately too many cats in animal shelters without homes and we therefore have an ethical and moral duty to prevent our male cats from siring unwanted kittens.
- **As a treatment to limit straying as straying causes nuisance.**
- **To prevent fighting** - fighting males are much more likely to spread diseases such as FeLV, FIV and FIA to other cats. They are also likely to suffer from fight injuries such as abscesses.
- **To reduce undesirable urination behaviour** - the smell of tomcat urine is very pungent.
- **To prevent the perpetuation of genetic defects.**

Spaying of Queens

The spaying operation, or ovariohysterectomy, involves a general anaesthetic, with removal of the ovaries and the entire uterus down to the level of the cervix, usually via an incision in the flank of the abdomen of the queen. The main reasons for spaying a queen are to:

- **Prevent unwanted kittens** - there are unfortunately too many cats in animal shelters without homes and we therefore have an ethical and moral duty to prevent our female cats from having unwanted kittens. Neutering also prevents the risks and costs associated with cats that need an out-of-hours caesarian.
- **Prevent the risks of disease transmission at mating** (such as FeLV, FIV, FIA and upper respiratory tract infections).
- **Reduce the risk of cat bite abscesses from fighting.**
- **Control nuisance** - female cats will call regularly (about every two weeks from January through until the autumn) if they do not get pregnant. Having entire female cats in an area will attract entire males with the attendant problems of spraying, fighting and caterwauling. By spaying the aim is to reduce the risk of being hit by a car or other trauma when out roaming, looking for a mate or alternatively the inconvenience of keeping the queen confined to the house when she is calling.
- **Prevent uterine infections** (Pyometra).
- **Prevent cancerous tumours of the uterus or ovaries.**
- **Reduce the risk of mammary tumours.**
- **Prevent the perpetuation of genetic defects.**

There may be some reservations about spaying and castration, but most are not justified when examined more closely as follows:

- Cost of neutering can be thought of as a disadvantage but is a routine cost that should be factored in before acquiring a cat.
- The misconception is that neutering causes weight gain – only if a pet is fed too much after neutering! Our vets and nurses will be able to advise you on the appropriate type and amount of diet to be fed post neutering.
- Any animal with a previous history of having a bleeding problem or having a relative with a bleeding problem should be investigated prior to undertaking any elective surgical procedure.
- Delayed blood clotting occasionally occurs after vaccination, so it is safest if neutering is best deferred until three weeks after vaccination.

We ask that your cat be brought into the surgery between 8.30-9am. Your cat will need to be starved overnight from 7pm, although water should still be made available. You will need to complete a consent form with contact details for the day, and also to give written consent for the procedure. A vet or nurse will then check your pet over before admission to ensure the patient is in good health and the heart and lungs sound normal. We offer a pre-operative blood screen to check for abnormalities of the blood cells, kidneys and liver prior to giving an anaesthetic. We usually recommend this service for more senior patients, but it is available if you would like the reassurance for younger pets.

Female cats are given a "pre-med" which contains a sedative and painkiller and reduces the amount of anaesthetic the queen will require. Once the pre-med has taken effect, the queen is anaesthetised by an intravenous injection of anaesthetic. Once anaesthetised, a breathing tube is passed into the queen's airway. Oxygen and anaesthetic gas then passes through the tube as the queen breathes. The surgical site is clipped and cleaned whilst the surgeon scrubs their hands and arms, and then wears a hat and mask and sterile gown and gloves. The spay procedure is performed as described above.

Tomcats, on the other hand, are given a single injection to induce general anaesthesia, as the procedure of routine castration is much quicker and simpler. The anaesthetic in tomcats can also be reversed, so the recovery period initially is much quicker.

After surgery the cat is monitored throughout recovery in a kennel and unless there are any complications will go home later the same day. A nurse will discharge the animal and discuss aftercare with the owner. They should have a post-operative check two to three days later and if stitches are present, as is usually in the case in queens, they are removed at ten to fourteen days.

Veterinary advice should always be sought in each individual case.



March 2010



Quick Reference Guide

Neutering Your Cat



Endell Veterinary Group

49 Endless Street, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP1 3UH

Tel: 01722-333291 Fax: 01722-338778

www.endellveterinarygroup.co.uk