



Neutering Your Cat

Neutering (castration) is the surgical removal of a male cat's testicles. This simple procedure prevents unwanted breeding and brings many health and behavioral benefits.

Why Should I Neuter My Cat?

Once a male cat reaches puberty (around 6–10 months), unwanted behaviors often begin, including:

- **Territorial marking** — Spraying strong-smelling urine indoors.
- **Roaming** — Traveling farther from home, especially at night.
- **Fighting** — Territorial fights can cause painful abscesses and spread diseases like **FIV** and **FeLV**.

"The **longer** a male cat sprays and fights, the **less likely** neutering will completely stop these behaviors."

By increasing the size of his territory, he increases the likelihood that he will encounter other cats and get into fights for territorial dominance. Fight wounds can result in severe infections and abscesses. Diseases such as FIV and FeLV, which cause immunosuppression and AIDS-like syndromes, are spread through cat bites. These incurable diseases tend to be more common in non-neutered male cats.

Neutering helps prevent:

- Marking and roaming
- Injuries from fights
- Spread of infectious diseases
- Overpopulation and unnecessary euthanasia in shelters

When Should My Cat Be Neutered?

Neutering is typically recommended around **5–7 months of age** — **before** puberty starts. In some cases, early neutering at **2–3 months** may be performed to address overpopulation concerns. Check with your veterinarian about the best timing for your kitten!

What Happens During Surgery?

- Your cat will undergo general anesthesia.
- Small incisions are made in the scrotum to remove both testicles.
- Stitches are usually not needed because the incisions are very small.

You'll receive instructions to **withhold food** before surgery (but water is usually allowed) to minimize anesthesia risks.

Are There Any Risks?

Neutering is a safe and common procedure, but like any surgery, small risks exist:

- **Anesthetic risks** are rare but possible. Any cat can have an unexpected adverse reaction following the administration of any drug or anesthetic. Such cases are impossible to predict, but fortunately are extremely rare.
- Another potential danger associated with anesthesia arises if the cat is not properly fasted prior to anesthesia. Anesthetized patients lose the normal reflex ability to swallow; during swallowing, the epiglottis, a cartilage flap at the entrance to the windpipe, closes and prevents food or water from entering the lungs. If there is food in the stomach, the cat could vomit while under anesthesia or in the early post-anesthetic period, allowing the food to enter the lungs and cause **aspiration pneumonia**, a potentially life-threatening condition.
- **Illness will increase the risks** associated with anesthesia. Pre-operative blood work is a useful screening test that may detect pre-existing problems that could interfere with the pet's ability to handle anesthetic drugs.
- **Post-operative infections around the incision site** are rare and typically treated easily with antibiotics.

To minimize the risks to your cat, it is essential that all pre-operative instructions are strictly followed and that you report any signs of illness to your veterinarian prior to an operation.

Most cats heal quickly and experience no negative side effects.

In certain cats, notably the Siamese breed, the hair that grows back over an operation site may be noticeably darker, believed to be due to a difference in the skin temperature. This darker patch usually grows out with the following molt as the hair is naturally replaced.