

The Neutered Cat

The neutering of cats, castration under general anaesthetic of males and removing the ovaries (ovariectomy) of females, again under general anaesthetic, carries with it many benefits for animal and owner. Toms are far less inclined to wander off from home and get into scrapes, which can lead to serious injury and infection, and they can't get any of the local queens pregnant with unwanted kittens any more. Queens don't suffer the stress associated with heat periods and the pestering of toms and they do not continue to fill the world with more of the aforementioned unwanted kittens.

Un-neutered queens can have three litters of kittens a year for about twelve or thirteen years, although it is said that one tortoiseshell had her first, and last, kitten at the incredible age of twenty-eight. From about eight years of age, the size of litters drops, but it can be calculated easily that an unsupervised - let's be honest about it - uncared-for, un-neutered queen could give birth to hundreds of young over her lifetime. The record for kitten production is held by a queen from (where else!) Texas, who had her 420th kitten at the age of eighteen in 1952.

Advantages of neutering

The advantages of neutering are obvious. Toms give up their gallivanting, and their urine, so often sprayed around the home as territorial marking, loses most of its pungent macho odour. Queens aren't pestered by neighbourhood suitors who have the habit of leaving their urinary calling cards on your back doorstep. Oestrus periods, with all the restless caterwauling and attempts to go out cat clubbing, occur no more and, most important of all, the owner is not faced with home-finding for handfuls of young cats or, saddest of all, having them euthanized.

Disadvantages of neutering

So, what are the disadvantages? Is neutering, as people sometimes say, 'cruel'? What changes in the neutered Thinking Cat? Neutering is certainly not cruel. The operations are carried out under full anaesthesia, are very safe, and are most unlikely to involve complications or be followed by medical after-effects. As the whole purpose of neutering, as far as the cat itself is concerned, is to lessen stress, harassment and the incidence of illness and injury, it is more than justified. It is most essentially humane and its value to the cat population as a whole is quite clear.

Some, but by no means the majority, of neutered cats tend to put on extra weight after the operation. Most neuters continue automatically to regulate their daily food intake, avoiding any tendency to obesity and not needing to be put on one of the slimming regimes now available.

Mentally, there is no doubt that the neutered Thinking Cat becomes somewhat more of a home-loving, calm and contented character, untroubled by the periodic swings in mood and behaviour that are fired by the powerful urgings of the sex hormones. Of course, its niche in the hierarchy of cat society, particularly as a tom, plummets, certainly in the neighbourhood, and also very often in multi-cat households. But he or she remains as intelligent, responsive and alert as ever. As we shall see, some males like, so it is recorded, eunuchs in the Turkish sultans' harems, may even retain a degree of sexual interest in the opposite sex.

It is worth noting that some cats which, instead of being neutered, receive progestagen type contraceptive/ anti sexual aggression medication for a long time can become rather lethargic and over weight, and occasionally lose hair and develop a 'pot belly'. Long-term use of this type of drug has also been implicated in triggering cases of diabetes, uterus inflammation and abnormality in function of the adrenal gland. I think these compounds are perfectly good and safe for the short term, but for a permanent effect on the cat, spaying or castration is much to be preferred.

About the Author

Visit <http://www.catfactfiles.com> for tips on cat training, preventing and solving your cat and kitten behavior problems. Extensive information and FAQs about pedigree [cat breeds](#), cat health and general cat care tips.

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