



Kitten Newsletter

Neutering

Female

Neutering a female cat or queen is known as “spaying” and can be done from 5 months of age. The procedure is traditionally carried out on the flank (side) and involves the surgical removal of both ovaries, uterus and cervix (where possible). If a cat isn’t spayed they come into season or “call” approximately every 3 weeks during their breeding season, which runs from April-October, although it is possible for them to get pregnant at other times of the year. A cat’s season is often characterized by lordosis (arching of the back) and “calling”, a high pitched meow beckoning potential mates to her. The cat is unusual in that she is an “induced ovulator”, which means that every time she is mated an egg is released making pregnancy more likely.

Spaying also eliminates some risks and reduces others such as:

- ◆ Unwanted pregnancy
- ◆ Pyometra (infected womb)
- ◆ Straying to look for a mate
- ◆ Diseases associated with mating such as leukaemia and aids
- ◆ Calling and associated annoyances
- ◆ Road traffic accidents due to looking for a mate



Male

Castration is the term used for neutering a male cat, again from 5 months of age and involves the surgical removal of both testicles through the scrotum.

An un-neutered tom (male) cat is more likely to:

- ◆ Stray looking for a mate
- ◆ Become involved in territorial fighting
- ◆ Spray—use urine as a territorial marker
- ◆ Contract leukaemia or aids through fighting or mating
- ◆ Be involved in road traffic accidents through looking for a mate.



The Day of the Surgery

Both operations involve the patient being admitted at the surgery early morning, having been starved from 8pm the night before (so kept indoors overnight). They can usually return home after 3pm the same day (we will ask you to phone the surgery to check on their progress at approx 2pm).

The patients are discharged by a veterinary nurse at some time after 3pm and full instructions are provided for after care.

Pre-Op Cat Information

To prevent stress and to aid in their recovery, especially for nervous or very owner bonded cats, we recommend these few tips on how to make your cat's trip to the vets as stress free as possible.

- Get the carrier out a few days in advance
- Make sure it smells clean and familiar
- Play games in it or even put food in it to link positive experiences

The Car Journey

- Secure the basket using a seatbelt for your safety as well as your cats
- Secure the blanket inside the carrier too—this will help with the “out of control” feeling that cats find so scary
- If possible use a cat carrier that allows the cat to see out.

Provide a “comforter” for your cat - an old sheet or towel that can be sacrificed. Keep it for a couple of days prior to admission in your bed or laundry basket so it has your odour on it. Then if required it can be torn up into several pieces if your pet needs a prolonged stay and your scent can be preserved by putting the pieces into a plastic bag. Prior to admission it is also advised that you wipe the patient over well with a cloth that is also carefully stored (i.e. in a bag) to retain the cat's normal scent. Prior to returning home the cloth can be rubbed over the cat again to reduce the surgery smells which other cats in the household may find so offensive. This can also help to minimize post-hospitalization stress and aggression that can happen amongst cats in your home.

If your cat does require a stay in hospital, then we encourage you to visit as this can have a positive effect on your cat. Please ask if this is possible in your cat's case.

Insurance

Midforest Veterinary Practice strongly recommend pet insurance. If the unthinkable should ever happen to your cat, then it's comforting to know that the bills are covered except for the policy's excess (approx £50). However, the subject of which company can be a minefield, so this information sheet is designed to help with some of your questions.

There are hundreds of companies that can insure your cat, but there are subtle differences between them to be aware of:

- Life cover or just 12 months? Some companies provide cover for life. This means that should your cat develop an illness which needs lifelong medication, then the company will continue to pay each year, only deducting the annual excess. Other companies only provide cover for 12 months, so pay for claims only made in that year and not if the medication continues into following years.
- Vet's fees. Always check the level of cover provided as this can vary considerably.
- Optional extras. Some policies may pay for special veterinary diets, rewards and advertising should your cat go missing and alternative therapies such as homeopathy.

For most policies, routine work, such as neutering, vaccinations and dental scaling is not covered. Most other conditions **which were not diagnosed before the policy was taken out** are usually covered.

The treatments and techniques available for your cat are developing rapidly and increased costs are subsequently involved.

Here are some examples of recent treatment costs:-

- A complicated fracture repair following a road traffic accident can cost up to £2000.
- Long term management of a diabetic patient can cost around £800 per year.

Having insurance is peace of mind and security that your cat can have the best treatment available.

If you decide against insurance, then the practice runs a savings scheme whereby you can save towards the cost of your vet's bills. This can pay for all routine work or be an emergency fund should the unforeseen occur. You decide how much and how regularly you would like to save.

If you have any questions or require further information, then don't hesitate to contact either surgery.

