

Desexing cats



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We recommend that **all cats should be desexed between five and six months of age**, before the onset of sexual maturity. This involves spaying (ovariohysterectomy – removal of the uterus and ovaries) in female cats and castration (removal of testicles) in male cats.

There are many benefits to desexing:

- It makes male cats more placid and friendly but importantly does not change their inherent personality.
- It reduces the urge for male cats to roam and be aggressive towards other cats, resulting in fewer fights and problems with wounds, and thus also decreasing the risk of feline AIDS infection. Undesexed male cats tend to become more aggressive towards other cats and unsettled during breeding season.
- It eliminates the strong 'tom cat smell' of undesexed male cats.
- It stops female cats coming into heat, preventing unwanted pregnancies – it is very easy for a female cat to become pregnant and even have multiple pregnancies in the one breeding season.
- Spaying helps to prevent uterine infections and mammary cancers (breast cancers) in female cats. This is especially beneficial if performed before the first heat cycle. Mammary cancer in particular is not uncommon in undesexed females or in females that are spayed after sexual maturity. There is no strong evidence to support it is better to delay spaying until after the first heat, and it is also a fallacy that it is beneficial to your cat's development to have a litter before spaying.
- Undesexed female cats can become quite vocal and unsettled when on heat. They can cycle every two to three weeks during breeding season, which starts towards the end of winter each year.
- It is cheaper to register a desexed cat with local councils.

The desexing procedure is routine and safe, and is performed on a day-patient basis. Animals should be fasted on the day of surgery.

A small incision is the only external sign of surgery. Most cats recover very quickly, with the majority entirely back to normal within a few days. Any skin sutures that have been put in are removed 10 days after surgery. Males do not have any sutures and therefore do not require a recheck.

We routinely place a tattoo inside the left ear of the cat to indicate that it has been desexed.