



# Feline Neuter FAQ

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## WHY NEUTERING IS A GOOD IDEA

Neutering a male cat is an excellent step in helping your young man grow into a loving well adapted household citizen. The main reason to neuter a male cat is to reduce the incidence of objectionable behaviors that are normal in the feline world but unacceptable in the human world.

*Roaming & Fighting:* 90% will reduce this behavior with neutering 60% reduce this behavior right away.

*Urine Marking:* 90% will reduce this behavior with neutering approximately 80% reduce this behavior right away. (The extreme odor of tom cat urine is reduced after neutering as well.)

Another reason to neuter a male cat has to do with the physical appearance. A cat neutered prior to puberty (most cats are neutered at approximately age 6 months) do not develop secondary sex characteristics. These include a more muscular body, thickenings around the face called “shields,” and spines on the penis.

## WHAT IS DONE EXACTLY

The feline neuter is one of the simplest surgical procedures performed in all of veterinary medicine. The cat is fasted over-night so that anesthesia is performed on an empty stomach. The scrotum is opened with a small incision and the testicles are brought out. The cords are both pulled free and tied to each other or a small suture is used to tie the cords and the testicle is cut free. The skin incision on the scrotum is small enough so as not to require stitches of any kind.

**EARLY NEUTER?** A common animal shelter practice has been to adopt a young kitten with the new owner paying a neuter deposit to be refunded when the kitten is neutered at the traditional age of six months. The problem has been that new owners do not return and young cats go unneutered. Early neutering allows for kittens to be neutered prior to adoption. There has been some controversy over this practice as it flies in the face of tradition but all research to date has shown no negative consequences to early neutering. Some myths have been:

- **EARLY NEUTERING IS MORE LIKELY TO PREVENT OBJECTIONABLE BEHAVIORS THAN IS NEUTERING AT A LATER AGE.**  
This has not borne out. Neutering at any age is associated with the same statistics as listed above.
- **KITTENS NEUTERED EARLY WILL BE STUNTED OR SMALL.**  
This is not true though early neutered kittens will not develop the more masculine appearance described above.
- **EARLY NETUERED KITTENS WILL HAVE A NARROWED URETHRA WHICH WILL PREDISPOSE THEM TO BLOCKAGE WITH FELINE LOWER URINARY TRACT DISEASE.**  
Early neutering does not seem to be a significant factor in this syndrome.

Our hospital supports early neutering but prefers that kittens presented for neutering weigh at least 3 lbs so that the tissues are not too difficult to manipulate.

## RECOVERY

There is minimal recovery with this procedure. Most hospitals, like ours, discharge kittens the same day as surgery. There should be no bleeding or swelling. It is a good idea not to bathe the kitten until the incisions have healed 10-14 days from the time of surgery.