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SURGICAL PROCEDURES IN CATS: NEUTERING, SPAYING, AND DECLAWING



Neutering:

Most owners will have their male cats neutered since it is a well known worry that they will “mark their territory” or urinate in inappropriate places if they are left intact, and the urine of adult intact male cats is *extremely* pungent. We recommend neutering your cat between the ages of 5 and 6 months. This should also reduce behaviors such as mounting other cats in the household or overt aggression toward family members.

Spaying:

Female cats are seasonally polyestrus, meaning they can go in and out of heat frequently during the spring and fall. When a cat goes into heat, she exhibits signs such as vocalization, rolling over on her back, standing with her hind end elevated, being anxious, urinating out of her box, and not eating well. During heat cycles, she may also have a tendency to want to escape from your home in search of a mate.

Besides these behavioral considerations, there are very important medical benefits to having your female spayed. We know from current literature that spaying a female prior to her first heat will virtually eliminate the chance of breast cancer in her lifetime. This surgery is a complete ovariectomy, so it eliminates all chances of ovarian and uterine cancer as well as uterine infections. We recommend spaying cats between five and six months of age. Most females will not come into heat before this. Although not preferable, if necessary we will spay a cat while she is in heat.

Declawing:

An elective procedure, declawing should not be taken lightly, and isn't necessary if a cat doesn't use its claws to destroy furniture or to be aggressive. When a cat is being destructive and methods such as frequent nail trims and scratching posts have failed, we will declaw your cat at your request. While declawing should be considered a last-resort procedure, we are willing to perform this surgery because we want your relationship with your cat to be a happy and non-frustrating experience.

If it is determined that declawing is necessary, we generally prefer to declaw cats whenever their routine spay or neuter is being performed, usually at between 5 and 6 months of age. We will declaw a kitten as early as 3 months of age if it is being very destructive; in this circumstance, the spay or neuter can also be moved up and performed as early as 3 months of age. By doing both procedures at the same time, the cat experiences only one bout of surgical stress and one course of anesthesia.