



ALLEY CAT RESCUE

AN ALLIANCE FOR CAT PROTECTION

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Types of Spay and Neuter Procedures

Spay/Neuter is a vital component of preventing cat overpopulation. Veterinarians and animal welfare groups widely recognize the importance of this medical procedure. Although most Americans are familiar with the traditional surgical spay/neuter procedures, there are different methods to sterilize a cat. Some of these approaches, such as through oral medication, need to be studied further before Alley Cat Rescue would recommend their use as a typical spay/neuter protocol. Chemical sterilants can have a place in controlling cat colonies in the U.S., but again at this time, they cannot adequately replace surgical sterilization and more research is required.

Neuter procedures for male cats:

- *Traditional neuter (orchietomy):* removing the testes
 - *Advantages:* decreases problem behaviors such as aggression, spraying, and yowling
 - *Disadvantages:* surgery is needed, procedure can be longer than other options
- *Vasectomy:* veterinarian makes an incision in the scrotum, blocks off tubes
 - *Advantages:* surgery is usually quicker, faster recovery period
 - *Disadvantages:* male cat still produces high levels of testosterone which will not prevent problem behaviors
- *Injectable sterilant:* a chemical compound is injected into a male cat's testicles causing sterility
 - *Advantages:* does not require anesthesia or surgery, procedure is fast
 - *Disadvantages:* potential adverse side effects such as swelling, used abroad but not approved for use in the U.S.

Spay procedures for female cats:

- *Traditional spay (ovariohysterectomy):* removing the ovaries, fallopian tubes, and uterus
 - *Advantages:* reduces problem behaviors, chances of complications are low, prevents all potential diseases to the ovaries and uterus
 - *Disadvantages:* requires surgery, greater risk of bleeding when the uterus is removed
- *Tubal Ligation:* blocking the fallopian tubes to prevent sperm from reaching the egg; the uterus and ovaries stay in tacked.
 - *Advantages:* less invasive
 - *Disadvantages:* increased risk of disease, pyometra, and infections, does not reduce problem behaviors
- *Left lateral flank spay:* surgery that uses a side incision rather than a midline incision, predominantly used in England
 - *Advantages:* less of a chance for infection, decreased risk of evisceration, easier to monitor recovery of incision on feral cats
 - *Disadvantages:* spay scar will be covered with fur once healed, making it difficult to know if the cat has been spayed, some studies show this surgery causes more discomfort in cat

- *Progestins*: hormone that can be given as an injection or oral medication
 - *Advantages*: less stressful for feral cats (medication can be placed in their food)
 - *Disadvantages*: cats need multiple courses of medication or injections, caregivers might not know if all the cats consumed the medication; adverse side effects including mammary and cystic tumors, pyometra

Both spay and neuter procedure:

- *Immunocontraceptives*: contraceptive vaccine that targets hormones
 - *Advantages*: no surgery is required, can activate the cat's immune system to fight infections, diseases and cancers
 - *Disadvantages*: not approved for use in cats in the U.S., booster vaccines required every two years

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