



ALLEY CAT RESCUE

AN ALLIANCE FOR CAT PROTECTION

P.O. BOX 96499 WASHINGTON DC 20007 • 301 277 5595 • ACR@SAVEACAT.ORG

Early-Age Spay/Neuter

At what age should kittens be spayed or neutered?

Traditionally, veterinarians sterilized kittens around 6 months of age. However, studies have shown that early-age spay/neuter surgery between 8 and 16 weeks of age is safe. Early-age spaying also helps decrease cat overpopulation. A female cat can become pregnant as young as 4 months old and could have her kittens before some veterinarians would even recommend spaying.

Benefits of early-age spay/neuter

- Younger animals recover from surgery more quickly than older ones do; they experience less blood loss and far fewer postoperative complications than adult cats do.
- Eliminates risk of pyometra (infection of the uterus)
- Reduces risk of cervical, uterine, and mammary cancer
- Reduces risk of prostatic enlargement and disease in males
- Reduces the risk of testicular cancer in males
- Reduces urination or territorial spraying
- Reduces aggression and roaming behaviors
- Reduces risk of transmitting FIV; reduces males fighting for territory and mates
- Leads to a longer life span
- Helps curb cat overpopulation



Misconceptions about early age spay/neuter

Misconception: It is healthy for a female cat to have a litter of kittens before she is spayed.

Truth: There is no medically proven benefit to allowing females to have a litter of kittens. In fact, female cats who are spayed before their first heat are usually healthier and have a reduced risk of breast and uterine cancer. Additionally, euthanasia is the leading cause of death in cats. Early age spay/neuter will greatly reduce the number of kittens being born and prevent countless cats and kittens from being euthanized at shelters.



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Misconception: Kittens cannot get pregnant prior to 6 months of age.

Truth: Kittens can become pregnant as early as 4 months of age and give birth to their first litter when they are only 6 months old. Endorsed by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), many veterinarians are opting to spay and neuter kittens as early as 2 months old. These young animals recover from surgery more quickly than do older ones, and they experience less blood loss and far fewer postoperative complications than do adult cats.

Misconception: Spaying or neutering a cat early in age results in behavioral issues.

Truth: Spaying or neutering a kitten early in age can actually curb certain behavioral issues such as territorial spraying/urinating and aggression.

Organizations that endorse early-age spay/neuter

- American Animal Hospital Association
- American Humane Association
- American Veterinary Medical Association
- American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
- Association of Veterinarians for Animal Rights
- Spay USA

References

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