

10 Myths About Spaying and Neutering Your Cat

As a loving pet parent, you want your cat to have the best life possible. Spaying (a female cat) and neutering (a male cat) are procedures that prevent them from reproducing. Spay/neuter provides many benefits and makes life better for you and your cat.

Understandably, you may have questions and want to learn more before scheduling your cat's spay/neuter. Here are ten of the most common myths about spaying and neutering your cat:

Myth #1: Spaying and neutering is expensive.

Many organizations and shelters offer low-cost spay/neuter services. [United Spay Alliance](#) has put together a [comprehensive state-by-state, county-by-county referral list](#) to help you locate affordable spay/neuter services in your area. The organization routinely reviews, audits, and updates this information to provide the most accurate referral directory around.

Myth #2: My cat's personality will change.

Spaying or neutering will not change your cat's personality, but it will reduce unwanted behaviors.

An unspayed female cat goes into heat for 6 days on average every 3 weeks during the breeding season, which lasts from January to late fall in the Northern Hemisphere. When a female cat is in heat, she makes yowling sounds, repeatedly rubs against you or objects, and may mark areas by spraying urine. If there are unneutered outdoor male cats in your neighborhood, they may start hanging around your house, spraying urine on it, and even try getting into your house.

Unneutered male cats are also prone to fighting with other cats and roaming, which can expose them to dangers like traffic.

Myth #3: Spaying or neutering will cause my cat to become overweight.

Spaying or neutering does not cause your cat to gain weight or develop a saggy belly. The most common reasons for weight gain are overfeeding and lack of exercise! [All felines have saggy bellies](#) (called primordial pouches), even big cats like tigers! The primordial pouch serves important functions like protecting a cat's stomach during fights with other cats, allowing them to store more food in their stomachs, and enabling them to fully extend their back legs.

Myth #4: It's painful and unsafe.

While you might be nervous about your pet having surgery, it can help to know that spay and neuter surgeries are the [most common procedures that vets perform](#). Your cat will be under general anesthesia and will be treated with medication to reduce pain. You can typically bring your cat home the same day of surgery, and you can help their healing process by keeping them as quiet as possible for a few days after surgery to allow time for their incision to heal.

Myth #5: It does not provide health benefits.

Spaying and neutering is very beneficial to your cat's health. It decreases their chances of developing some kinds of cancers and will help them live longer.

A [study by Banfield Pet Hospital](#) found that spayed female cats live 39% longer and neutered male cats live 62% longer than cats who aren't spayed or neutered.

According to the [ASPCA](#), spaying your female cat helps prevent uterine infections and breast tumors. By neutering your male cat, you protect him from testicular cancer and some prostate issues.

Myth #6: It's unnecessary because my cat won't be around other cats.

Even if you keep your cat indoors, it could still escape. Cats that haven't been spayed or neutered have a biological drive to reproduce and will try to get outside to find mates. When [cats roam outside](#), they can be injured in fights with other cats or they may be hit by cars.

Myth #7: My cat is too young or too old.

Did you know that cats can become pregnant when they're just [4 months old](#)? To prevent that, it's helpful to know that kittens can be spayed or neutered as soon as they are [two pounds](#), which is generally around eight weeks old.

There are notable advantages to having your kitten spayed or neutered at an early age. That is why Feline Fix by Five, a program of [Marian's Dream](#) and [United Spay Alliance](#), is working hard to educate pet parents and veterinarians, advocating for cats to be spayed and neutered by five months of age. Spaying and neutering your cat before five months provides the best health and behavioral benefits. Female cats will get the strongest protection against uterine infections and breast tumors. Male cats won't begin getting into fights. And it will prevent both male and female cats from starting to mark their territory by spraying urine. Learn more and find a list of [participating veterinarians](#) at [FelineFixbyFive.org](#). If your adult cat has not been spayed/neutered yet, it's not too late! According to [Tufts University's Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine](#), if a vet examination and blood work results show that a cat is healthy enough to have anesthesia, then they can be spayed/neutered.

Myth #8: It's unnecessary because my cat is male.

Since your male cat cannot become pregnant, you may think that it's not as important to have him neutered. But when your male cat is unneutered, he is more prone to fighting with other cats, urine marking, and roaming. Neutering will prevent those behaviors, and protect your cat from testicular cancer and some prostate issues.

Myth #9: Female cats should come into heat or have a litter before being spayed.

There are no benefits to allowing a cat to come into heat before being spayed. A cat [could become pregnant](#) the first time that she comes into heat and mates. Having a litter of kittens will not make your cat more affectionate, and you'll have the responsibility of trying to find a home for her litter of kittens.

Myth #10: Pet overpopulation is not an issue in my community.

Animal shelters are full of beautiful, loving cats and kittens waiting for forever homes. Unfortunately, many never find that perfect match, and about 530,000 cats are euthanized in shelters each year. You can help end this cycle by spaying and neutering your kittens and cats!

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