

# Why We Recommend Neutering Your Male Cat

## What is a “neuter”?

Neutering is a surgical procedure, done under anesthesia, to remove the testicles and suture the cords. The skin incision in the scrotum is small enough that it does not require stitches at all. Most cases do not even require an overnight stay; the pet may go home at the end of the day. This simple procedure is safe and effective, rendering the cat sterile. The benefits of neutering are many, including reducing health risks and negative behaviors.

## Running the Risk of Disease

Two of the most insidious diseases that veterinary doctors find amongst all cat populations are feline leukemia virus and feline immunodeficiency virus. These fatal diseases are passed from saliva to blood, most often during fighting or mating (male cats bite female cats during intercourse). There is no cure for either of these viruses; only prevention is possible. By neutering your cat, he is less likely to be infected through fighting or mating behavior. Rabies is another serious disease that unvaccinated cats can transmit from saliva to blood. Vaccination, keeping a cat inside and neutering all help to protect him from these health risks.

## Behavior and Neutering

Intact male cats are not “bad” when they mark territory with urine, fight other cats or roam for days on end. Their behavior is directed by hormones and is natural to a male predator in the wild. The problem begins when they need to adapt their behavior to a human household. Neutering is an excellent way to eliminate or at least greatly diminish the incidence of these nuisance behaviors. According to recent statistics, more than 90% of “roaming” (leaving the house and environs looking for potential mates and new territory) is eliminated by neutering the cat. Fighting is diminished by more than 90% through the process of neutering. Eliminating this aggressive behavior protects the pet from the resulting injuries and introduction of diseases into the bloodstream. Because the cat is not driven by hormones to protect territory, urine marking is also decreased by more than 90%.

## Too Many Kittens!

Although the litter of kittens that your intact male produces may be invisible to you as “somebody else’s problem”, it is really the entire community who bears this burden. Every year, thousands of unwanted, homeless kittens are euthanized. Never mind all of the homeless cats and kittens who are attacked and killed by other animals, killed by cars on the streets and die of illness without veterinary care. Not only does this indicate a sad failing on our part as pet owners, it carries a hefty price tag. Millions of dollars are required to run the humane societies that provide for our homeless animal population. If more pets were sterilized, these funds could provide other services to the community.

**For all of these reasons, Patterson Dog and Cat Hospital hopes that you will decide to neuter your cat.**