

Why We Recommend Spaying Your Cat

What is a “Spay”?

Spaying is a surgical procedure involving the removal of the ovaries and uterus. This procedure is safe and effective and will render the cat sterile. Spaying is still possible, even if a cat is in heat or has an unwanted pregnancy. The procedure is complicated by these factors, but is still very safe for the animal. Most cases are kept overnight to insure bed rest for healing, after which they may return home. The animal must return to the office after 10 days for a recheck and suture removal. Spaying offers many benefits, both behavioral and health related.

Avoiding The Risks of Cancer

Female cats who are not spayed run the risk of ovarian, uterine and mammary cancers. Spaying eliminates the possibility of uterine and ovarian cancers, as the uterus and ovaries are removed during the spaying process. The chances of developing mammary cancer are diminished to almost zero if a cat is spayed before her first heat cycle. Cats who are spayed after the first heat have a lower incidence of mammary cancers than intact females. Because the hormones produced by the ovaries (estrogen) are responsible for the growth of many mammary tumors, spaying can even help retard the growth and spread of already existing tumors.

Preventing Serious Illness

Middle-aged and older female cats run the risk of a life-threatening disease called “pyometra”. This is an infection of the uterus that develops after repeated heat cycles. During the heat cycle, it is easy for bacteria in the vagina to enter the uterus and cause infection. The uterus with pyometra swells dramatically and is filled with pus, dying tissue and toxins. Untreated, the disease is fatal. The only effective treatment for pyometra is spaying. Spaying early in a cat’s life will prevent the possibility of developing pyometra.

Will “Spaying” Change My Cat’s Behavior?

The answer to this question is both yes and no. Most of the year, a female cat is not in heat and is unaffected by her hormones. Your cat will behave as she did most of the year before she was spayed. However, the yowling and general “ carrying on” associated with the heat cycle, as well as the urge to get outside and find a mate, will disappear with spaying. This will alleviate the nuisance and possibilities of injury and unwanted kittens. In addition, there is no basis to the popular myth that a spayed cat will become fat and lethargic. Only overeating and a lack of exercise will result in weight gain.

Too Many Kittens

Although a life-long relationship with a feline companion is a joy, there are just too many homeless and neglected cats. Every year, humane societies are forced to destroy thousands of these unwanted cats. By not spaying your cat, you are adding to the community’s burden of providing for our local cat population. Our clinic strongly encourages our clientele to make the decision to spay their cat.

For all of these reasons, Patterson Dog and Cat Hospital hopes you will make the decision to spay your cat.