

The existence of unwanted cats is one of the major problems involving companion animals in the United States. The Cat Fanciers' Association, Inc. (CFA), has reaffirmed its commitment to reducing the number of unwanted cats euthanized in this country. To relay that message to the general public, CFA has produced bumper stickers and public service announcements for radio. These announcements and bumper stickers encourage the neutering and spaying of cats and promote responsible animal care.

Surgical altering is the only foolproof and permanent method of birth control for cats. A spay is the surgical removal of the uterus and ovaries of a female animal. A female cat's risk of getting mammary cancer is reduced when it is spayed before its first heat cycle. Neutering is the surgical removal of the testicles of a male animal. Neutering a male cat generally prevents the development of mating behavior such as spraying urine to mark territory. Interestingly, a new policy has recently emerged regarding [early spay/neuter of young kittens](#). This policy is endorsed by the American Humane Association, American Veterinary Medical Association, Spay USA, American Animal Hospital Association, Winn Feline Foundation, CFA and other animal organizations. CFA and others encourage the use of early spay/neuter for kittens from shelters. This will ensure that all kittens from shelters are altered prior to leaving the shelter, thus eliminating the need for contracts and follow up.

When early spay/neuter is not utilized, CFA supports the policy of the Humane Society of

the United States (HSUS) in its Guidelines for Responsible Pet Adoptions (1190). This policy states that, "shelter(s) must be able to confirm that at least ninety (90%) of its adopted animals are sterilized to ensure that the shelter itself is not contributing to the pet overpopulation problem." We must continue to insist that local shelters and animal control agencies alter all cats prior to adoption or require a written sterilization agreement. (The agreement should contain a deposit requirement and language requiring the owner to alter cats/kittens within 30 days of adoption or by their 4th-6th month estimated birth date.) There must be provisions for strict follow through and/or penalties with the above. Currently, compliance by people adopting pets from animal agencies is estimated to be only 60%. Improvement in this area will have a great impact on reducing a major source of the shelter population. These requirements should be vigorously enforced before any coercive legislation is even considered. (The state of Texas adopted this policy through legislation passed in 1992 and other states have followed.)

**Neuter/spay programs must be directed toward the main sources of unwanted animals; unowned/feral cats; unaltered cats that are allowed to roam and randomly mate; and, cats that are mated**

**indiscriminately but purposefully (i.e. not a part of a recognized breeding program).**

We also consider it the responsibility of conscientious breeders of pedigreed cats to take all appropriate steps to ensure that

animals placed by them, not specifically intended to be used in a recognized breeding program, be altered before any opportunity to mate. The success rate of our breeders should not be less than those proposed by the HSUS for shelters. Pet stores, rescue groups and any others who place cats must also ensure similar sterilization compliance.

**Pedigreed cat breeders have used sterilization contracts and follow up for at least 25 years with a high rate of success.**

## **Neuter and Spay It's the Humane Way**

### **What is Spaying?**

A spay (ovariohysterectomy) is the surgical removal of the uterus and ovaries from the abdomen of an animal.

### **What is the purpose of spaying?**

The spay is the only foolproof method of birth control for female cats, and it is a permanent method.

### **Will spaying eliminate heat cycles?**

Spayed animal no longer goes through heat cycles. Female cats normally come into heat several times a year. Spaying ends several problems associated with the heat cycle, including spraying urine and the necessity of confining females to prevent the approaches of persistent males. Spaying also prevents such irritations as a howling cat in heat.

### **Are there other good reasons for spaying?**

The risk of mammary cancer is reduced if a cat is spayed before its first heat. Also spayed pets cannot develop pyometra, a serious uterine infection. Finally, difficult pregnancy and delivery in older cats or ill cats is prevented.

### **Do cats gain weight after spaying?**

Your cat will not gain weight, if you provide a balanced diet and encourage regular exercise.

### **Should cats have at least one litter before being spayed?**

No. Your cat does not need to have a litter of kittens to mature.

### **What is Neutering?**

Neutering (castration) is the surgical removal of the testicles from the scrotum of an animal.

### **What is the purpose of neutering?**

Neutering is the primary method of sterilizing male cats.

### **What are other benefits of neutering?**

Neutering an immature cat usually prevents development of mating behavior and the obnoxious habit of spraying urine to mark territory around the house and yard.

An unneutered cat cannot control its mating instincts. Given freedom to wander, such an animal may become hurt or lost, and is almost certain to be responsible for unwanted litters. Humane societies cannot place all unwanted animals; millions must be put to sleep. Countless others are abandoned.

### **See your veterinarian!**

Discuss your questions about breeding and birth control with your veterinarian.

### **The answer is to SPAY or NEUTER your pet cat.**

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## **Cat Facts: Spay & Neuter Programs**



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