

What every Feline Family should know:

Spay/neuter saves lives

Spayed and neutered cats live longer and are at less risk of serious health risks such as breast cancer in females and testicular cancer in males. Spay/neuter also reduces unwanted behaviors such as spraying and wandering. Plus, you are insuring that your cat is not adding to the problem of pet overpopulation. Unless you are a licensed, reputable breeder, there is no reason NOT to have your cat spayed or neutered.



When to spay/neuter

Many shelters spay and neuter at a very young age. At The Cat Practice, we recommend waiting until 5 to 6 months in age and 5 pounds in weight for females, and 4 to 6 months in age for males.

Choosing a veterinarian

Choose a veterinarian experienced in performing spay/neuter surgery. Make sure that your cat is provided with:

- Pain medication to reduce discomfort during and following surgery.
- Monitoring of vital signs during surgery.
- IV fluids during surgery for females who are at risk of a drop in blood pressure which can cause permanent kidney damage later in life.

Facts about feline SPAY

When a female cat gets spayed, her ovaries and uterus are removed which means no noisy heat cycles. Spays are performed under general anesthesia with careful monitoring. The veterinarian makes a small incision in the abdomen which is later closed when the procedure is done using sutures that dissolve once the incision heals. Your cat is given pain medication and, in most cases, is ready to go home at the end of the day.

Prior to surgery: Your cat must have nothing to eat after midnight in preparation for surgery.

After surgery: Limit your cat's movement, especially jumping and running, for the first 24 hours. Your cat may eat slightly less after going home, but should eat normally by the following day. The incision may appear slightly red or swollen, which is normal. Side effects are rare, but contact your veterinarian if you notice:

- Lethargy / not acting right
- Not eating / vomiting
- Diarrhea / loose stool

Facts about feline NEUTER

Neutering is the removal of the testicles of a male cat; the penis is left intact. The surgery is done under general anesthesia with careful monitoring. Two small incisions are made through the scrotum over each testicle and the testicles are removed. The incisions are so small that they do not need to be sutured and seal quickly on their own. Your cat is given pain medication and, in most cases, is ready to go home at the end of the day.

Prior to surgery: Your cat must have nothing to eat after midnight in preparation for surgery.

After surgery: Most male cats are back to normal in a few hours!

Cats often hide their discomfort making it difficult to tell if your pet is in pain. Effective pain management is essential to your cat's health and wellbeing. Find out how to spot signs that your cat may be hurting along with options for treatment in **Recognizing & treating pain in your cat** available from The Cat Practice.



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875 S. Worth, Birmingham, MI 48009 • 248-540-3390 • thecatpracticepc.com

NOTE: Our "Feline Family" series covers many important topics to help your feline family members live longer, better and healthier lives. For other topics, or more information, go to www.thecatpracticepc.com or call us at 248-540-3390.

What every Feline Family should know:

Recognizing & treating pain in your cat






Today there is no reason for any pet to be in pain. Studies show that, in pets, even short-term pain, left untreated, leads to increased pain sensitivity, anxiety and fear. Chronic or persistent pain can delay healing, reduce appetite and activity level, compromise your pet's immune system and affect your cat's overall health and wellbeing.

NEVER try to treat your cat's pain with over-the-counter human pain medications (such as Tylenol), which can be fatal to cats.



Cats often hide their pain

Tolerance for pain varies among cats. The best way to tell if your cat is in pain is to become familiar with what is "normal" behavior. Take note of eating habits, activity, sleep habits, litter box use and other behaviors. This will help you more easily spot changes. Like many animals, cat often hide their pain since it's a signal to other predators that they are weak and vulnerable. Get to know the warning signs that your pet may be in pain:

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|  Changes in eating habits or loss of appetite | Change in patterns of movement |
|  Withdrawal or hiding from human contact | Lack of activity or lethargy |
|  Sitting on top of paws | Sensitivity to touch |
|  Spending more time in the litter box than usual | Licking and biting at a particular area of his/her body |
|  Crying out or whimpering | |

Causes of pain in cats

Cats can be in pain following an injury or trauma. Illnesses and conditions such as bladder infections, joint problems, stomach problems, arthritis or tooth decay can all cause your cat significant pain. Serious illnesses like cancer can cause chronic or constant pain. Cats can also experience pain while recovering from surgery and other medical procedures.

Treating feline pain

If your cat has a medical condition such as tooth decay or a urinary tract infection, **treating the underlying condition and cause of the pain should relieve your cat's discomfort.** Your veterinarian will prescribe feline pain medication along with medication to treat the underlying medical condition. If your cat is in chronic pain, as a result of an ongoing condition such as arthritis, your veterinarian will recommend a pain management program specific to your cat's needs.



Often a multi-modal approach to pain management is recommended. This might include:

- Pain medication specifically for your feline.
- Alternative therapies such as massage and acupuncture. (Ask your veterinarian if this might be beneficial to your cat.)
- Herbal remedies.
- Accommodating your cat by making litter boxes and food dishes easier to reach, putting things on one floor so your cat doesn't have to climb stairs, using ramps and steps to reduce jumping, and creating a quiet, stress free environment.

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