

Cat Neutering During the Pandemic

Overview

- During the pandemic, some veterinary practices (including PDSA) have had to delay preventative services such as neutering in order to prioritise sick and injured pets.
- Unneutered cats are at a higher risk of roaming, getting into fights, behavioural problems, catching diseases such as FIV, and pregnancy (female cats can have their first season and get pregnant any time from 4 months old).
- If your vet isn't able to neuter your cat at the moment, you may want to contact another practice in your area to see if they can help.
- If you can't have your cat neutered, it's important to keep him/her safe until you can.

General information

During lockdown, vets are having to prioritise the sickest pets, which means that many routine procedures such as neutering have been delayed or cancelled.



The British Veterinary Association (BVA) and Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) have asked vets across the UK to prioritise urgent/essential treatment, and to comply with social distancing at all times. Sadly, this means that some practices are unable to offer their routine procedures such as neutering, [vaccinations](#), and microchipping. If your vet is unable to neuter your cat at this time, you may want to contact some other local vets to see if they are able to help, and in the meanwhile, follow our guidance below to keep them safe. Please keep in mind that your vets will be doing their best to care for some very sick pets and will really appreciate your patience and understanding during this challenging time.

I am a PDSA client and I want to have my cat neutered, what do I do?

Sadly, PDSA are not able to offer preventive services such as neutering at the moment. This is because, we are facing a huge demand for our services, and at present, our priority is treating pets in need of urgent or lifesaving treatment. We hope to start providing preventive services again at some point, but it's likely that a reduced service will continue into the foreseeable future. We recommend that our clients try to find another veterinary practice for their cat's neutering - try a local private practice, or use the [RCVS website to find vets in your local area](#). Don't worry, even if your cat is neutered elsewhere, they will stay registered with us should they become unwell at any point. We really appreciate your patience and support during this difficult time.

[Click here for PDSA service updates.](#)

Risks of being unneutered

Pregnancy

Unwanted pregnancy is the most obvious risk of being unneutered. A female kitten can have her first [season](#), mate and get pregnant any time from 4 months old, and cats will mate even if they are related!

Roaming, fighting and disease

Unneutered cats tend to roam further from home in order to claim territory and mate. This puts them at higher risk of being involved in [road traffic accidents](#), getting [cat bite injuries](#) and picking up diseases such as [FIV](#) and [FeLV](#).

Territory marking

Unneutered male cats are more likely to mark their territory by urine spraying.

Keeping your unneutered cat safe

Keep them indoors

It's essential to keep your kitten/cat indoors until they are neutered - unneutered kittens can get pregnant from as young as four months old, and are at a higher risk of being injured or attacked by other cats. Read our free guide to [keeping indoor cats happy and entertained](#).

Keep boys and girls separate

Keep male and female unneutered cats apart once they are 4 months old, even if they are related.

Check if you can have them neutered elsewhere

If your vet isn't able to neuter your cat at present, try another local vet practice, or use the [RCVS website to find vets in your local area](#).

FAQ's

My cat is spraying and becoming aggressive, what should I do?

It's common to assume that behaviours such as urine spraying and aggression can be fixed by neutering but it's actually very common for these issues to be caused by stress. Stress is most common during times of change and is very likely at the moment, during Covid-19 lockdown. Read our advice on ['preventing stress in cats'](#).

If your cat is showing any behaviour changes that you are worried about, it is best to contact your vet for advice.

I think my cat might be pregnant, what should I do?

If you think your cat is pregnant, contact your vet to discuss your options.

I'm keeping my cat indoors but they're not happy, what should I do?

It's really important to continue keeping your cat inside until they are neutered, even if they really want to go outdoors. Try to keep them entertained as much as possible. You could try:

- Playing with their favourite toys
- Putting up some shelves and making new places for them to explore on top of furniture
- Making sure they have their own space in the house
- 'Scatter feeding' or treat feeders can make feeding time more fun and last longer

If your cat has suddenly started behaving differently and you're worried about them, it's best to contact your vet for advice. Behaviour changes can sometimes be a sign of a health problem so it's always safest to get veterinary advice.

My cat is poorly, what should I do?

If your cat is unwell or showing signs that are worrying you, contact your local PDSA Pet Hospital for advice. [You can request a vet call back on our website](#) or if it's an emergency, call your local Pet Hospital directly. Our phone lines can be very busy but this is the quickest way to get help for your pet if they need urgent care.

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