

Cat neutering during Covid-19 lockdown

Overview

- During Covid-19 lockdown, your veterinary practice might not be able to offer routine procedures such as neutering.
- Staying entire (unneutered), puts your kitten/cat at a higher risk of pregnancy, roaming, getting into fights, catching certain infectious diseases and developing behavioural problems.
- A female kitten can have her first season, mate and get pregnant any time from 4 months old.
- **Cats will mate even if they are related!**
- Keep unneutered cats indoors and away from others until they are neutered.

Can I have my cat neutered during lockdown?



During lockdown, UK vets are prioritising the sickest pets, which means that in most circumstances, routine procedures such as neutering will not be possible during this time (this may vary between practices).

The British Veterinary Association (BVA) and Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) have asked vets across the UK to provide urgent/essential treatment only and to maintain social

distancing at all times. This will mean a delay in routine procedures such as neutering and [vaccinations](#), but will enable vets to continue treating the sickest pets whilst protecting the general public, veterinary staff and NHS. Get in touch to arrange an appointment for your cat's neutering once your vet is running a full service again.

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!**
- Signs of a season/heat include:
 - Loud meowing and yowling
 - Being unusually affectionate
 - Arching her back and lifting her tail/back end
 - [Eating less](#)
 - A swollen vulva (private parts)
 - A small amount of vaginal discharge/blood

Roaming, fighting and disease

- Unneutered cats tend to roam further from home 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](#) from other cats.

Territory marking

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

Keeping unneutered cats safe

Keep them indoors

- Keep your kitten/cat indoors until they are neutered - unneutered kittens can get pregnant from as young as four months old.

Keep boys and girls separate

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

My cat is spraying or 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.

Think your cat might be pregnant?

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

Published: April 2020