**Neutering Your Cat**

* Neutering your pet prevents both male and female cats from being able to reproduce.
* Neutering in the male involves a general anaesthetic and the surgical removal of the testicles. This process is also known as ‘castration’.
* Neutering in the female involves a general anaesthetic with the surgical removal of both ovaries and uterus, also referred to as ‘spaying’ or ‘ovariohysterectomy’.

**Why should I neuter my cat?**

Neutering is a humane way to reduce the stray cat population, preventing thousands of unwanted kittens being born each year. These may be cruelly abandoned or needlessly destroyed, many stray kittens are exposed to illnesses and diseases such as ‘cat flu’ as they are not vaccinated.

There are other reasons why neutering is advised by your veterinary surgeon:

* Un-neutered females can become pregnant and with any pregnancy there are risks. The greatest risk is if the cat has difficulty giving birth. This will result in a general anaesthetic and emergency caesarean. There are no guarantees that the kittens or the mother will survive this procedure.
* Entire females are at risk from developing a womb infection (known as Pyometra) which can potentially be fatal.
* Un-neutered male cats are more prone to stray over larger areas. Determining territory by scent marking, this increases the risk of being involved in an accident. E.g. Road traffic accident’s.
* Entire males are more likely to fight over territory resulting in fight injuries such as cat bite abscesses. This also increases the spread of diseases.
* Both male and female cats will ‘call’ to potential mates. Females will have seasons every 3 weeks and consistently call if they do not get pregnant. The noise can be a nuisance!

**When should I neuter my cat?**

Neutering was previously recommended at 6 months of age when the kitten reached sexual maturity. However, it has now been shown that neutering from 4 months of age is safe.

**Are there any risks with early neutering?**

With any general anaesthetic there is a risk. Veterinary surgeons have been trained in the use of a variety of anaesthetics and treat each patient as an individual. Research has shown that neutering cats at 4 months of age does not affect their growth or behavioural development. If cats are neutered when they are young and healthy the risk is very small, with younger cats often recovering more quickly.

**How long will it take to recover?**

In most veterinary practices the cat is a day-patient so there is no overnight stay. Some patients can be a little sleepy from the general anaesthetic when they return home. It is normally recommended that the patient is kept quiet for around ten days post-operation. This is to give the wound time to heal. Female cats will be discharged with a small Elizabethan collar to protect the wound. It is recommended that they are kept indoors with access to a litter tray so the wound can be monitored daily. Male cats do not normally need a collar unless they lick the area excessively. Both will be discharged with a few days pain relief. They will be checked by a nurse at 3 days after surgery and females a second check at 10 days is required to check the wound has healed and remove the sutures.