

JIM'S PET PAGE



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After 4 years of writing articles for Jim's Pet Page, I have decided to give my creative fingers a break and this will be the last article for a while. I hope you have found the articles interesting and informative and have learnt some useful tips about caring for your much loved pets. I know that the feedback from our clients has always been positive and the articles well received.

For my last article, I would like to discuss a question I commonly get asked in the surgery i.e.

Should I Neuter My Cat Or Not?

I think this is a really silly question. Well the answer is "Yes", of course. But you would be surprised at how many people do not consider having their cat neutered. Perhaps I'm preaching to the already educated? If so, pass on the message. If not, please read on.....

Why should I neuter my cat?

Statistically, a neutered cat, male or female, will live a longer and healthier life. Their risk of exposure to fatal diseases such as Feline Leukaemia Virus or Feline Immunodeficiency Virus is much reduced. Their urge to roam is significantly curtailed reducing the number of roads they will cross with the risk of meeting an untimely death under a car, or a large veterinary bill if they are lucky enough to survive. Neutered cats are less likely to fight over their territory.

However, and most importantly, there are more cats in Cats' Protection care than they can find homes for without us allowing our own cats to produce more. All the rescue centres are at bursting point. There is no need for your cat to have kittens "because it would be nice for your daughter to witness a birth", or "it would be nice for Maisie to

have babies”. The feline species are not going to become extinct because you decide to spay your cat!



But it's good for a cat to have kittens, isn't it?

No, there is no health advantage in having kittens. In fact, there are risks in having kittens, aside from the risks involved in getting pregnant in the first place. It is not uncommon for a cat to require a caesarean section at significant cost, too.

So what happens when my cat is neutered?

As usual, the boys have it easy! A light general anaesthetic, two small incisions, some pain relief and they are back on their feet in no time at all with very little post-op care required. It's a little bit more complicated for the girls, but it is still a day job with little discomfort afterwards. The operation involves removing both the ovaries, so she cannot “call” again, as well as the womb through a small wound on her side or belly.

Okay, so when can I have it done?

The sooner the better. Leave it too long and it will be too late. We have had kittens as young as four months pregnant! At Blake Vets, we follow The Cat Group's recommendations and neuter as soon as the kitten vaccination course is complete. Generally speaking this is from 14 weeks of age. There is no need to wait until they are six months old now. Whilst we would always recommend you vaccinate your cat, especially before visiting a veterinary surgery or cattery, you can still have your cat neutered if it has not been vaccinated.

I've heard that vets are really expensive, so what will it cost me?

You may be surprised to know that most vets actually charge a lot less to neuter a cat than it should cost! However, if their fee is still too much, some charities have funds to assist with neutering. Cats' Protection may be able to help. Call Dawn on 01278 684662 if you are in need of assistance with having your cat neutered.



So, now there is no excuse – your cat does not need to have kittens, your cat will be healthier for it, the operation is simple and can be done when your cat is young and

will not know what they've missed and it won't cost you a fortune! Just remember that it takes two, so always neuter the boys as well – we wouldn't want them to feel left out!

Winners of Cutest Rabbit Competition

Finally, I must announce the winners of our Cutest Rabbit Competition that we held in March at our Bridgwater and Burnham on Sea surgeries. The response was overwhelming with over 50 clients bringing their rabbits in for photographing!

At Bridgwater, the winners are:

Cutest Baby: Buttons Atyeo aged 10 months



Cutest Adult: Doughnut Houghton aged 1 year 2 months



Cutest Wrinkly: Numpkin Wales aged 6 years 5 months



At Burnham on Sea, the winners are:

Cutest Baby: Maisy Morgan aged 9 months



Cutest Adult: Smokey Hadler aged 4 years 8 months



Cutest Wrinkly: Oscar Poole aged 7 years 9 months



All the winners will receive a bag of food, a toy and some rabbit treats.

The photographs of all the entrants to the rabbit competition can be seen on display at the Bridgwater and Burnham on Sea surgery.

It just remains for me to say, thank you to all the readers for your interest and comments over the last 4 years and I wish you and your pets a happy and healthy future.