**Neutering the Male Cat**

Neutering a male cat is an excellent step to help your young man grow into a loving, well adapted household citizen. The main reason to neuter a male cat is to reduce the incidence of objectionable behaviors that are normal in the feline world but unacceptable in the human world.  
  
***Roaming***: More than 90% will reduce this behavior with neutering. Approximately 60% reduce this behavior right away   
  
***Fighting****:* More than 90% will reduce this behavior with neutering Approximately 60% reduce this behavior right away  
  
***Urine marking***: More than 90% will reduce this behavior with neutering. Approximately 80% reduce this behavior right away.  
  
Another reason to neuter a male cat has to do with the physical appearance. Cats neutered prior to puberty (most cats are neutered at approximately age 6 months) do not develop secondary sex characteristics. These include a more muscular body, thickenings around the face called shields, and spines on the penis.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | | http://www.vin.com/ImageDBPub/IM05000/IMG00452.gif | | ***Male cat neutered prior to puberty*** | | | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | | http://www.vin.com/ImageDBPub/IM05000/IMG00453.gif | | ***Male cat neutered after reaching puberty*** | | |

**What is Done Exactly**

The feline neuter is one of the simplest surgical procedures performed in all of veterinary medicine. The cat is fasted overnight so that anesthesia is given on an empty stomach. The scrotum is opened with a small incision and the testicles are brought out. The cord is pulled free and tied off and the testicle is cut free. The skin incision on the scrotum is small enough so as not to require stitches of any kind.

**Cryptorchidism (Retained Testicles)**  
  
**Authored by:**Becky Lundgren, DVM

Cryptorchidism is a condition in which a male’s testicles have not descended (dropped) into the scrotum. At birth, a male kitten’s testicles are located near the inguinal ring. By 2 to 3 weeks of age, they’re in the scrotum. By 6 months of age, they’re palpable in the kitten’s scrotum.

In the fetus, a structure called the gubernaculum connects the testicle (located next to the kidney during development) to the scrotum. If this structure fails to develop properly, the testicle will not end up in the scrotum, but will end up in the abdomen, the inguinal canal, etc.

Cryptorchidism can be unilateral (only occurring on one side) or bilateral (occurring on both sides). Unilateral cryptorchidism usually involves the right testicle. Bilaterally cryptorchid animals are usually sterile because the higher body temperature inside the abdomen is enough to prevent sperm production. (The animals will, however, still exhibit male behaviors.)

Cryptorchidism in cats is uncommon. The most common breed associated with cryptorchidism is the Persian. Congenital abnormalities that have been known to occur simultaneously with cryptorchidism are: patellar luxation, shortened tail, kinked tail, tetralogy of Fallot, tarsal deformity, microphthalmia, and upper eyelid agenesis. Unlike dogs, it may be possible to visually differentiate between a castrated cat and one with retained testicles, because cryptorchid cats have barbs on the penis.

The only treatment would be removal of the testicle. A separate incision may be made as the testicle may not be easy to palpate and will have to be searched for.