

Earlier-than-usual neutering can ease sexual aggression in male cats

Four state medical associations have endorsed fixing cats by five months of age, aligning with AVMA, AAHA, and AAFP

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Reducing aggressive behavior and minimizing health risks in cats are at the heart of the Feline Fix by Five Months campaign.

Launched in 2016, the movement, which promotes the early sterilization of cats in the interest of medical, behavioral, and community wellness, has been formally endorsed by state veterinary medical associations in Maine, Arkansas, Kentucky, and Mississippi.

In voicing support, the groups join national organizations American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA), and the American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP).

“When state veterinary associations embrace and endorse the recommended best practice of spaying and neutering cats by five months of age, it amplifies our message that the benefits of ‘fixing by five months’ are numerous and impactful to the health and welfare of cats, and to the problem of overpopulation in communities across the country and around the world,” says Feline Fix by Five’s program director, Esther Mechler.

While the recommended age for spaying/neutering cats is usually six months, performing the procedure earlier offers faster recovery and fewer unwanted litters, as well as a range of health and behavioral benefits that can help reduce the number of cats relinquished to shelters by their owners, Feline Fix by Five Months says.

Specifically:

- for females, the risk for mammary cancer (which is fatal in more than 85 percent of diagnosed cases) is reduced by 91 percent if a cat is spayed before her first estrous cycle;
- for males: neutering lessens aggression and urine marking, as well as roaming behaviors, which can result in serious injuries, diseases, and death; and
- in general: cats sterilized before puberty are less likely to exhibit undesirable behaviors secondary to sex hormones.

“Cat owners who may be unsure of when to spay or neuter their pet, or who wait until they are six months of age, are often faced with the dilemma of what to do with an unexpected litter of kittens,” says the campaign’s veterinary medical advisor, Philip Bushby, DVM, MS, DACVS. “Ironically, the problem is not always the result of owners refusing to spay or neuter their cat—they simply did not know performing the surgery before a cat reaches sexual maturity has benefits beyond just preventing ‘surprise’ litters.”

For more information on Feline Fix by Five Months, click [here](#).