



# **MEDIA RELEASE**

## **Stourbridge and District Cats Protection**

For immediate release: 15<sup>th</sup> July 2007

NEUTERING 1

## **Forget the myths – neutering is the cat's whiskers!**

**Cat owners may be put off having their felines neutered because of persistent myths about the procedure, despite a wealth of evidence proving its benefits.**

In an attempt to reassure owners that neutering is safe, simple – and actually makes cats healthier – Cats Protection's Stourbridge and District Branch has compiled a list of neutering facts.

It follows a recent survey by Cats Protection and Dogs Trust which showed that only 9% of adults questioned realised that neutering was good for an animal's health\*

The myths include:

### **Myth 1: Female cats should be allowed to have "just one litter" before they are spayed**

**FACT:** There is absolutely no evidence to support this theory. Many owners think it is cruel to deny cats the chance to reproduce, but actually cats have no concept of "broodiness" or have any emotional need to be a parent. On the contrary, female cats who are allowed to become pregnant do so very young – sometimes as young as six months – and before they are physically mature. This can result in complications which may endanger the life of the cat and/or the kittens.

### **Myth 2: It is cruel to neuter a cat**

**FACT:** Neutering is a straight-forward procedure that is carried out under general anaesthetic by a veterinary surgeon. Although there is a risk with any operation, neutering carries a very small risk and most cats recover very quickly from this surgery.

### **Myth 3: Neutering is unhealthy**

**FACT:** Evidence shows that neutered cats lead happier, healthier and safer lives. In female cats, if they are spayed before they have their first season; it reduces the chances of mammary tumours by 97%. It also takes away the risks involved in pregnancy and giving birth, particularly in small or physically immature cats. In male cats, neutering significantly decreases their tendency to wander off in search of a mate, lowering the potential to get lost or involved in a road accident. Neutered cats are less likely to fight with other males, which can cause painful wounds and abscesses or transmit diseases such as FIV or feline leukaemia. Neutering will diminish the risk of testicular cancer in male cats and womb infections in females. The unpleasant habit of spraying is also more common in un-neutered cats – who produce a much more pungent urine.

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**Myth 4: Neutering makes cats fat**

**FACT:** Whilst it is true that neutering causes a hormonal change which may make the cat more susceptible to put on weight, there is no reason why a cat which is fed a well-balanced diet should be fat.

**Myth 5: Neutering is expensive**

**FACT:** Considering the life-long benefits for your cat of neutering, the procedure is relatively cheap. Owners should expect to pay between £45 - £60 for a female cat and £25 - £40 for a male. Cats Protection offers financial assistance with the cost of neutering for anyone on a limited income. For more information, please contact the Stourbridge and District Branch on 07092 300688.

**Myth 6: Neutering changes a cat's character**

**FACT:** Neutering only changes behaviour related to reproduction - habits which are often unpleasant or inconvenient for the owner. In males, this includes fighting, spraying urine or wandering off. Neutering will stop female cats from 'calling' when they are in heat, which can be very noisy, particularly in oriental breeds such as the Siamese.

**Rob Hall, of Cats Protection's Stourbridge and District Branch, said:**

"Neutering is essential in controlling the feline population. Cats are prolific breeders and, with one un-neutered female capable of being responsible for 20,000 descendants in five years, it's easy to see how the problem can escalate."

To find out more about neutering and general cat care, please contact Cats Protection's Stourbridge and District Branch on 0845 644 2103 or visit [www.stourbridgecats.org.uk](http://www.stourbridgecats.org.uk).

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**Notes for Editors**

- Please contact Rob Hall on 07092 364572 for more information or to arrange a photo.
- Cats Protection's Stourbridge and District Branch is part of the charity's nationwide network of 29 Adoption Centres and 261 voluntary-run Branches that together find loving homes for around 60,000 cats every year. The Stourbridge and District Branch currently has many cats and kittens in its care awaiting a second chance in life. For more information on giving an unwanted or abandoned cat a home, please contact the Branch on 0845 644 2103.
- The Stourbridge and District Branch covers postcodes DY1 – DY13, which includes Stourbridge, Kinver, Kingswinford, Hagley, Brierley Hill, Tipton, Dudley, Sedgley, Kidderminster, Stourport, Bewdley and the Wyre Forest area.
- Cats Protection's registered charity number is 203644. The charity's vision is to ensure that every cat is given the chance of a life where it will be treated with kindness and understanding of its needs.