



How daylight can affect the heat cycle of cats?

Cats are seasonal breeders and only enter their reproductive cycle at a certain time of year. This is why most litters of kittens are seen between April and September.

- Cats need at least 12 hours of continuous daylight to start cycling.
- In the wild, this ensures kittens are born when there are more food resources available.
- In response to the shorten fall & winter days, a cats body produces melatonin.
- Melatonin production in the brain suppresses the cat's reproductive functions.
- Other factors affecting a cat's heat cycle are the weight, age, general health and breed.

Common behaviors of a cat in heat include:

- Increased vocalization – these frequent and loud sounds are a way to attract male cats
- Increased affection –cats may be more affectionate, particularly to touch on their back and rear.
- Spraying urine - female cats might spray urine, or bleed a tiny amount during heat.
- Urine contains both pheromones and hormones, which act as signals of reproductive status.
- Rubbing their face on you or objects – used to spread their scent.
- Putting their hindquarters in the air – giving it a little wiggle

How often does a cat go into heat?

- The cycle can last anywhere from 1 -20 days, the average length is seven days
- Time between cycles can last anywhere between a few days to a few weeks. This means they can go into heat in as little as two weeks after giving birth to a litter.
- Female cats begin their cycles around February with the lengthening days.
- The hormonal cycle of an indoor cat can be triggered by artificial light, therefore going into heat at any time of year.
- Cats are induced ovulators, meaning the act of breeding stimulates the release of eggs.
- Cats require 3-4 matings within a 24 hour period, but these can be only a minute or two and may take place with multiple tomcats.
- Cats can get pregnant up to five times a year since their gestation period lasts 64-71 days.
- The average litter size is 4-6 kittens for most breeds.

When can a cat go into heat?

- Male and female cats reach sexual maturity at 4-6 months of age, when still very much a kitten.
- This varies depending on the cat's genetic makeup and breed.

Benefits of Spaying and neutering cats

- Eliminating the chances of unplanned reproduction
- Eliminating the risk of testicular cancer
- Reducing the production of testosterone decreasing the chances of aggression between cats
- Minimizing the likelihood of urine spraying
- Reducing a cat's tendency to roam by looking for a mate.