



Cat Reproduction and Overpopulation

One thing cats do very well is multiply. The average cat becomes sexually mature between 5-7 months of age but can mature as early as four months. Once a female starts a heat she will continue in roughly two week intervals until she becomes pregnant. Heat season usually runs from spring until autumn. This is very much unlike dogs whose heat cycles are well defined and generally occur twice yearly and last for about three weeks. To humans a cat's heat cycle is characterized by exaggerated affection and crying. Male cats don't have heat cycles but respond to female's cycles. Male cats are attracted to females by scent and vocalization. Both sexes will show unwavering determination to mate and once the urge strikes it will be very hard to keep them inside.

Female cats don't drop her eggs to her uterus until she is stimulated by the male. Male cats actually have spikes on their penis which stimulates the egg to be dropped and fertilized. Females can mate with several males during her heat and kittens of the same litter may have different fathers. Pregnancy lasts for about nine weeks and cats on average have 2-6 kittens a litter. A cat can go in heat while she is still nursing her litter and have up to three pregnancies a year. Before the year ends her first litter has sexually matured and is ready to impregnate or become pregnant. In one year one female can produce 12 children and 16 grandchildren. That total is based on 4 surviving kittens per litter and allocates 4 kittens to each male. Male cats can produce many kittens that the owner is never aware of. It's easy to see why it's so important to have your cat spayed or neutered.