

Your Female Cat In Heat? How to Tell When She Is and What You Can Do

For many new cat owners, the first time a cat goes into heat is usually a worrying situation. As a cat in heat exhibits behavior which may be similar to a sick cat or a cat in pain, many cat owners think their cat is unwell, when in fact their female cat is simply in heat.

Are you surprised if I tell you that your female cat will be in heat for most of her life, until she is spayed? A cat reaches sexual maturity by 5 months of age and from then on, will be in heat for the rest of her life, unless she is spayed, old or unwell.

The only time a healthy female cat is not in heat is when she is pregnant. She will stay in heat until she is mated. Once she is mated (usually with several toms), ovulation takes place (shedding of the egg from the ovary, 1 egg per kitten). Pregnancy lasts between 56 to 63 days.

Cats go into heat more often during the warmer months, from February through September. However, in countries where there are no seasonal cycles, a female cat can be in heat throughout the year in between pregnancies!

SIGNS THAT YOUR CAT IS IN HEAT

There is a distinct change in behavior when your cat goes into heat. You will find her meowing and yowling in a tone you have never heard before. She may also not eat as well as her usual appetite and may act as if she's in pain.

Some cats in heat are excessively friendly and will roll around on the ground when you play with her or pet her. When rubbed on her back, she will raise her hindquarters and tread with her hind limbs.

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR CAT IS IN HEAT

This really depends on what you are keeping your cat for. Is she a pet companion for you or are you keeping her in order to breed cats?

Keeping Your Cat As A Pet

If you are keeping her as a pet, do consider spaying her. The main considerations for doing this is whether you have the resources to take care of a new litter of kittens every few months. Are you able to find her kittens good homes and if not, are you able to take care of them yourself? Many kittens are put down by humane organizations because cat owners are unable to take care of them or to find homes for them.

If you are decide against spaying, then simply allowing your female cat outdoors will attract a roaming tom cat that will mate with her. Your female is likely to mate with a few toms before she goes out of heat. Do be prepared for the fights (which will probably keep you up for quite a few nights) happening between 2 or more tom cats for the right to mate with her!

Keeping Your Cat To Breed

If you are keeping your cat for breeding, try to delay the mating until she is at least one year old. Breeding is usually better if a cat is allowed to mature first.

If your cat is pedigree, make sure to keep her indoors. Tom cats from miles away (some of dubious pedigrees) are attracted by the yowling of a female cat in heat and will wait outside your home for the first chance to mate.

Consult a registered breeder to arrange for a suitable mate for your female cat. Do take a look at the tom before sending your cat to him. Ensure that the tom is vaccinated and certified free from disease.

It is advisable to bring your cat to the tom, as some toms may be distracted by an unfamiliar environment. Your cat in heat may also attack toms that are suddenly introduced to their territory.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

About the Author

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