

# The Kitten Seasons

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## DECEMBER 21

Each day becomes a little longer and it triggers the estrous or "heat." Some queens will exhibit signs of heat as early as late January. By mid-February, queens 5 months or older are likely to be ready for a tom. Once bred, the clock starts:

2 months gestation, then birth

2 months nursing, then weaning

+3 months, kittens mature at a rapid rate

**5 months of age (August/Sept)**



## MARCH 20

Birthing begins with a few litters, then crescendos with activity. Cats are in heat, pregnant, or nursing. Peak time is May, June and July and there is a **shelter kitten tsunami**, considering the weaning time is around 2 months of age.



## JUNE 21

Days are getting shorter. Heat is easing with a lot of overlap, and a number of surprised caregivers whose cats have had an "oops" litter are scheduling spays. But the damage is already done. The unplanned litters are now a problem. What is to become of all those kittens?

**Moms should be spayed 2 to 3 weeks after weaning (or when the breasts have receded.)**



## SEPTEMBER 23

The days are now short enough that heat is on seasonal hold. By mid-October heat is down to zero. This year's kittens are on the edge and not likely to be signaled into heat. Even female kittens in February will probably not go into heat this year, but all unspayed females will do so in the upcoming breeding season.

**Spay by 5 months - before winter solstice.**

# HOW TO HELP

If you are on Facebook and Twitter - we are too! Let's spread the word about **FIX by FIVE!** You can find information at [felinefixbyfive.org](http://felinefixbyfive.org) including articles, pictures, charts, and studies.

Print out the bookmarks we have on our website and bring to your veterinarian.

Ask your veterinarian if they are already encouraging spay/neuter kittens before five months. If your veterinarian is not convinced, give them materials such as the bookmark or articles from the resources page at [felinefixbyfive.org](http://felinefixbyfive.org).

Bring brochures to your local library, veterinary office, laundromat, salon, and other places where people gather. If you come up with new ideas share them with us, and we will share with everyone!

Talk with friends, family and colleagues about the right age to spay cats (fix felines!)

Send us your ideas and keep communicating until it is known that kitties need to be 'fixed' between the ages of two and five months —

# DONATE NOW



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**FELINE FIX  
by FIVE MONTHS**



**it saves lives**

# PROVEN BENEFITS:

**MEDICAL** Kittens spayed before the first heat have a 91% lower risk of developing mammary cancer which takes the lives of an estimated 75,000 cats every year. Spaying also eliminates the risk of pyometria.

**BEHAVIORAL** The hormones that develop if cats are left unaltered lead to nightly territorial fights, cat mating rituals and roaming. These unwanted behaviors often lead to relinquishment to shelters. Over 80% of cats relinquished to shelters or abandoned are unspayed/unneutered.

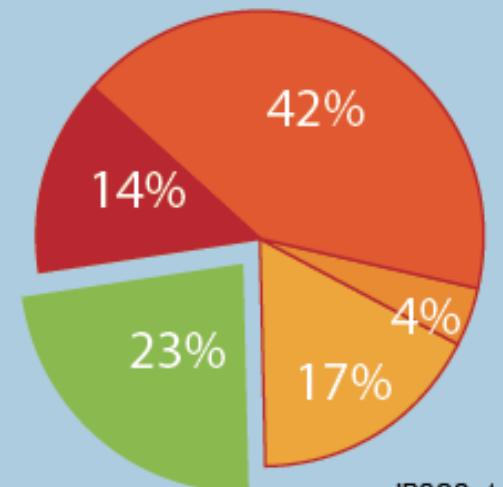
**COMMUNITY** Well over half the litters are "oops" litters - that end up in shelters or on the streets. Shelters are inundated with kittens, and older cats who may have found homes are often passed over. Cat complaint calls are at or near the top of the list in public health and animal control departments.



# THE ISSUE:

**Nearly 75% of people either "do not know," or think that 6 months or later is when a pet should be spay/neutered.**

- 9 months or older
- 6 months
- any age
- don't know
- 1-3 months



IPSOS study

**Fixing cats by five months of age saves lives.**

Fix by Five is a program of Marian's Dream and United Spay Alliance