

# Common Kitty Myths

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## 1. Cats can be treated like Small Dogs or Children:

Even amongst veterinarians, this was held to be true for many years. Cats were definitely second class citizens as things were extrapolated from dogs and children to cats. The cats were dying. There are many things that you can give to a child or a dog that absolutely cannot be given to a kitty. Drugs have different doses and in some cases are not even able to be given to a cat. One case in point is aspirin. You can give it to a child or a dog in the appropriate dose. Cats do not metabolize this drug like anyone else making it poisonous to kitties except at greatly spaced or minute doses.

## 2. Cats Suck the Breath Out of Babies:

It is not unusual to find babysitter kitties spending their time in the crib with a young child. They lick the lips of the babies when they have little spit-ups. Hence the old wives tale. These individuals will run and tell the parents when the babies are about to wake up. They hang around and allow the child to pull on their ears and tails, things they would scratch or bite the adult owners for trying. They show amazing tolerance to their kids. Mind you, this is not all cats, many run and hide.

## 3. Cats Should Eat Fish:

Actually cats love fish. They are programmed to eat high protein diets and fish are high protein. Is it good for cats, if you want to spend lots of money with your veterinarian. Cats are originally from the deserts of Africa. Their systems are not designed to have the calcium, phosphorous, magnesium balance in fish. It makes for stones in the individuals that have the genetics for it. It can cause a fat wasting disease in cats fed nothing but fish. This is caused by an enzyme in fish that blocks fat metabolism and is a disease also seen in humans. It is one of the most common food sensitivities causing severe skin problems. Fish has been cited as a contributor to hyperthyroidism.

## 4. Cats Should Drink Eat Milk:

Actually, most cats become lactose (the sugar of milk) intolerant shortly after they are weaned. They like milk (see the protein thing and they enjoy sweets). My Mama always told me just because I like something doesn't mean it is good for me.

## 5. You Should Wait Until The Cat is Six Month old or has a Litter to Breed Them

Wrong. Cats can be altered as soon as they can handle the anesthesia, around 2 pounds. The reason vets used to recommend waiting is there was an idea that prepuberal (yes cats have a puberty too) altering made for a smaller urethra. Since cats are prone to having bladder problems and urethral plugs a larger urethra meant fewer problems. It has been proven since that urethral size is hereditary and not related to age at time of surgery. Another common misconception is that early altering causes animals not to grow. Actually, the reverse is true. Sex hormones close the growth plates. Surgery slows puberty, so the animal is actually larger!

As far as having a litter before altering the cat, there is no scientific reason to have unwanted kittens before altering the mother. If you think it is easy to find home for kittens check with the Humane Society, the SPCA, HOPE, CAP or any of the hard working shelters around town. They can swiftly disabuse you of that idea.

## 6. You Can Make Money Breeding Cats:

WRONG,WRONG,WRONG!!!!!! I have raised cats for over 30 years. If you do a good job of raising animals it is hard to find 2 to breed together. There is no reason to breed an animal just because it has papers. That just means you know who its parents are. It is not a good reason to breed an animal because its parents are champions or grand champions. Breeding the best to the best creates pets. If your baby was sold to you as a pet it should have come with a spay/ neuter agreement-honor it. Unpapered pets aren't worth big bucks. Sometimes papered pets aren't worth big bucks. Do you want to take the chance of having a C-section with your girl or losing her to eclampsia(milk fever) or having to bottle raise kittens because your pampered girl can't be bothered to stoop to breast feeding? I can go on. Boy cats are no picnic either-they scream to call the girls, especially at night. Males urinate on vertical things to mark their territories so the girls can find them. Male cat urine has a very strong odor. If you wait too long to alter the boy after you figure out how disgusting they are(most cattery toms live in cages all their lives) they will continue to pee on everything because it has become a habit. Back to the hard to find 2 cats to breed together thing. I know you think I am crazy. I raise Cornish Rex. In my breed there is hereditary heart problems, genetic hypothyroidism, bad knees, crossed eyes, a lack of coat problem that I do not know the genetics of and the list goes on. If one of my cats pops up with any of these things it is altered. Also they must use their potties(not using it properly is genetic), they must be sweet(temperament is hereditary) and they must be a grand champion because I am breeding for beauty as well as health and temperament. By the time you go through the list of what cannot be bred you don't have a lot left to breed with and that is using some of the finest Cornish Rex cats in the nation. My breed is considered healthy compared to most. That means most breeders should have a harder time that I do if they are doing it right. Something to consider when you are looking for your next purebred pet.

#### 7. Cats Need To Go Outdoors To Be Happy:

Cats need 30 cubic feet of space to live a healthy life. This is from Nils Petersen who wrote the book on catteries. That is less than your bathroom. There are so many things outside in Houston, Texas and other places waiting to kill your cat. The list is sooooo long. Dogs, other cats, cars, tree trimmers, yard men, FELV, FIV, and FIP just to name a few. I have seen cats killed by all of the above.

#### 8. Cats Can Be Left Alone Without Any Problems:

Every summer I see at least one cat die because its owners left it all alone or with its housemates for more than 24 hours. Cats very attached to their owners get really upset when they are left alone-pet sitters don't count according to them. Cats go into fatty liver disease if they don't eat properly for 24 to 36 hours. Most yellow skinned cats die. I have several cats that come to my clinic that I have asked the owners not to vacation unless they can take their pets along.

I could go on, and on, and on. Until recently cats were second class citizens in the pet world. Now, more cats are registered than dogs. There are more cats in homes than dogs. We are a mobile, busy society and cats are easier than dogs to take care of. They tend to be healthier. They tend to be less breakable(when was the last time you heard of a cat with a broken leg because it jumped off the porch?). They tend to live a long time. Once we are trained by a cat we figure out just how good a companion they are. Enjoy your pet, pet the lap tiger.