

Buying an Entire Kitten V's a Desexed Kitten:

Here we open Pandoras Box - a total can of worms... There are pros and cons on both sides and arguments for and against but here are my personal thoughts and experiences on this topic.

Firstly... As of July 2020 the NSW Government requires pet owners to desex kittens prior to 16 weeks of age or an additional charge of \$80 per year will apply on top of the life time registration fee.

In my early days of breeding back in the late 90's and early 2000's I was adamant that it was not right to desex kittens so young and while I was not totally incorrect in this thinking, experience and knowledge has given me greater understanding and a very different perspective.

Back then kittens were typically sold at 9 & 10 weeks of age and to this day I wouldn't desex a kitten at 10 weeks of age (unless there was a hernia that needed to be operated on or some other similarly unusual circumstance under veterinary advice or in some unusual emergency situation).

Today it is seen as advantageous for both the buyer and the kitten to not leave its mother until 12 weeks of age. This additional time allows for considerable physical and emotional growth to occur as well as better socialisation skills. Kittens that leave their mother from 11+ weeks will typically be more litter tray confident, adjust easier to a new environment and be more physically and emotionally ready for their new adventure.

Some vets will still refuse or discourage kittens to be desexed prior to 4 months and in the case of many breeds it is possibly not necessary. Burmese however are prolific breeders and I have

seen many, many kittens come onto call or into season from as young as 14 weeks old which would be unheard of in most other breeds of cat and this is one of many reasons that I started to change my mind on selling my kittens desexed.

It is both distressing and disruptive for the owner when they are dealing with a constantly calling/crying cat that is pacing and desperate to get out. There are very experienced and suitable vets that will understand and work with breeders who acknowledge and understand why it is necessary to desex certain breeds of cat at a younger age. Desexing particularly a female kitten is complicated and the younger the kitten the more complicated and therefore risky the procedure is. Choosing a good and experienced vet is essential. I interview and have some lengthy conversations before working with any vet and I am very fortunate to have access to wonderful and very knowledgeable and experienced vets and we now have a long working relationship which I truly value.

I have heard people say that desexing the kittens at 12 weeks old negatively affects their growth and personality. I must say I have come to disagree with this sentiment over time. Having sold kittens desexed for many years and being fortunate enough to have these cats come back to me for boarding has allowed me to see that this is not the case at all. Many of my clients bring their Suchi Burmese back for Holidays here with us and their cats are 6 and 7kg and certainly not what I would consider to be on the small side for the breed. My clients rave about their loving and affectionate temperaments and friendly attention seeking personalities, typical of the Burmese breed.

I have not seen a single case where I believe that the desexing has negatively affected the growth or personality of the cat in fact quite the opposite. I have personally seen cases where I think the desexing has improved the temperament and settled a cat. Like people, some cats will be petite or on the small side due to other factors including genetics, diet, conditions/environment and overall health. At the moment I have a retired breeding cat here that was bred by another reputable breeder. This cat did produce kittens as a mature adult cat and has only recently been desexed. She was desexed purely due to her petite size and the desire to introduce size back into the breeders breeding program. This petite girl would be lucky to weigh 3.5kg and early desexing certainly can't be blamed for her petite size as she wasn't desexed until she was 4 years old.

I have also heard people say that kittens desexed young are more likely to have urination and kidney problems which I don't believe to be correct. In over 10 years of selling desexed kittens I have NEVER come across a case of a kitten that I have sold desexed having Kidney, Bladder or urination issues. The only case I have ever come across the kitten was desexed close to 20

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weeks of age and I am not convinced that his desexing had any impact on this issue.

Consider carefully the cost of an entire kitten versus a desexed kitten. Some breeders will sell entire kittens for the same cost as what another reputable breeder will sell a desexed kitten for. There are a few things to consider with this...

Firstly, Desexing a Female kitten is likely to cost upwards of \$300 with Males usually being a little cheaper. This cost needs to be added onto the purchase price.

Putting a kitten under anaesthetic does also come with its risks. If you are going to arrange to get the kitten desexed yourself this risk is on you. If the kitten suffers an adverse reaction or dies under anaesthetic this is entirely on you as the owner. Breeders that sell their kittens desexed are taking this risk on themselves and if the kitten was to die or suffer an adverse reaction they are footing the costs involved.

There is considerable time, effort and cost involved in a breeder selling their kittens desexed so this process is not done without good reason. It takes a 5 - 6 hours out of my day to take a litter of 3 -5 kittens to be desexed so if you factor in the cost of the desexing, travel costs, time and risks it would actually be to my advantage to leave this all up to the new owner but I don't feel that this is in the best interests of the owner or ethically the best option for my kittens.

I recently came across a case of a woman who had purchased 2 Male kittens from a breeder and both of the kittens are Monorchid (have only one descended testicle). The owner is now up for considerable extra costs in desexing her kittens on top of what she paid for the kittens due to the complications involved with this surgery. The owner would have been much better off buying her kittens from a breeder already desexed. The cost would have then been on the breeder and not on her.

I have also had people be dishonest about their intentions for a kitten I sell them. Many years ago and prior to me selling my kittens desexed, one such owner purchased an entire boy from another breeder a few months before purchasing an entire girl from me promising to have them both desexed at the appropriate time. However this didn't occur and the little female kitten was pregnant at the tender age of 6 months old. This was certainly not in the best interests of her health and caused considerable stress and disruption.

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In a different case back in my early breeding days a client that purchased an entire Male kitten from me "felt sorry" for the boy and decided not to desex him. She then rang to complain that he was spraying and marking around her home and she wasn't happy. It goes without saying that an entire male burmese cat is likely to spray.

I have numerous other examples that have, overtime, given me the reason to believe that it is actually more responsible for the breeders to desex their kittens prior to sale to a new home.

For further information please chek out ... [Desexing and Purrsonality](#)

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