

Question: My male cat is one year old and has been neutered. Recently he started mounting another cat in the house and other objects. We are wondering if the vet didn't do a good job neutering him and he may still have some male hormones. Is there a test we can do to see?

Answer: Although this behavior may be unusual and make you uncomfortable to see, it may be normal. Neutered, male cats may show mounting behaviors for one of three reasons: remaining testicular tissue after a neuter, the exposure to topical hormone or due to normal but unusual acts of behavior.

The first step is to have your cat examined by a veterinarian. There are very specific changes that are seen in intact male cats over a year of age that you will not see in a male cat that is neutered. The smell of his urine can also be an indication of whether or not he is neutered. If the veterinarian feels that these changes are present, there is a blood test that can be run to see if hormone levels are consistent with remaining testicular tissue. It would be very unusual for a veterinarian to neuter a cat and not remove all of the testicular tissue, but this is possible. The blood test will help the veterinarian have a better idea of what is going on.

If someone in the home is using topical hormonal replacement therapy, your cat may have had exposure to it without you realizing. This exposure could cause him to show signs of increased testosterone, resulting in the mounting behavior. Please discuss your medications with your doctor to determine if any of your medications could be affecting your cat.

The last possibility is that this may simply be his behavior, without any influence of hormones. If it is not affecting the other cat, I would let it be. Usually this is not a sexual behavior but rather a displacement behavior, meaning it is something cats do for attention or to self-soothe. Another option would be to try to distract him when he starts or try to predict and avoid when he may do it. If you are able to redirect his attention to toys or training, then reward the behavior that is desired. Try to avoid punishing this behavior or you may have bigger problems later.

Start with a call to your veterinarian and they will be able to help you determine the cause of this behavior and what should be done about it.

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