



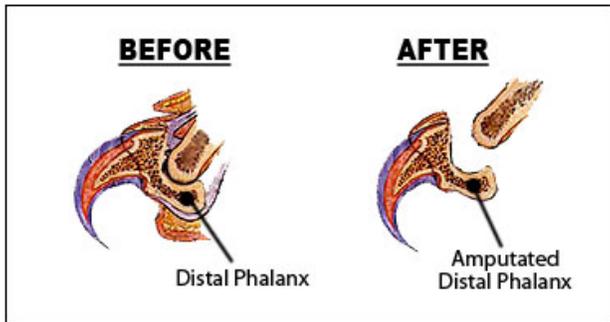
Country View Animal Hospital

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Declawing (Onychectomy)

Onychectomy, popularly known as declawing, is an operation to remove a cat's claws surgically by means of the amputation of all of the distal phalanges, or end bones, of the animal's toes. Because the claw develops from germinal tissue within the third phalanx, amputation of the bone is necessary to fully remove the claw.



The procedure in cats requires general anesthesia to induce complete unconsciousness and relaxation. The cat will receive a pre-anesthetic sedative-analgesic drug (pain reliever) to help her relax. An IV catheter would be placed at this time. A breathing tube is placed in the windpipe, and then an inhalation (gas) anesthesia in oxygen is used during the actual surgery. A local nerve block is used to aid in pain control. Injectable analgesics are also used. A surgical laser is used to dissect out the claw and the tiny piece of bone. The openings are closed using suture, surgical glue or both. If sutures are used they will not need to be removed because they are dissolvable.

Sometimes the paws will need to be bandaged to stop bleeding and/or prevent the cat from licking.

The overall *risks* of this surgery in a healthy young cat are low. The major risks are those of general anesthesia (drug reactions, decreased blood pressure/temperature, regurgitation, aspiration pneumonia and cardiac arrest, which can lead to death) and postoperative infection or additional surgery at the owner's expense.

The cat remains in the hospital for 2 days post-surgery where he/she is given additional pain medications and are monitored for any postoperative complications such as bleeding or the incisions opening. The cat is also in a controlled environment where he/she is less active. Use of a special collar may be necessary to prevent the cat from licking or chewing at the incisions. A special litter can be used that will not easily stick in the incisions. The day the cat goes home an additional injectable pain medication is given where the effects last 48-72 hours. Generally additional pain medication is not needed but is available if necessary.

Home care involves watching the paws for any signs of infection (redness, swelling, bleeding, oozing or warm to the touch) and keeping the cat as quiet as possible.

Declawing older or overweight cats can result in increased complications. Older cats are more prone to secondary infections and are often more painful due to extra weight on the toes. Plus, it can take a longer time to heal.

Declawed cats should be kept indoors because letting them out will only make them quite vulnerable to predators because their claws, which are their number one line of defense, are not there anymore.

It is important for you, the owner, to be aware that this is a procedure that benefits the owner rather than the cat. Declawing permanently alters the way a cat bears weight on its feet and may lead to long term complications such as;

- Chronic pain or limping
- Litterbox aversion/inappropriate urination and defecation
- Increase in other defensive behaviors, such as biting

A non-surgical alternative to declawing is the application of vinyl nail caps that are affixed to the claws with nontoxic glue, requiring periodic replacement when the cat sheds its claw sheaths (usually every four to six weeks, depending on the cat's scratching habits). Other alternatives include regular nail trimming; directing scratching behavior to inexpensive cardboard scratchers or *scratching posts*, or emery scratching pads that dull the claws; rotary sanding devices; covering furniture or using double-sided sticky tape or sheets such as Sticky Paws or acceptance of cats' scratching behavior.

Surgical/Anesthetic Options: Please initial your choice for each option.

Pre-Anesthetic Blood Work: Complete blood count and chemistry panel to evaluate for any pre-existing conditions that may increase your pet's anesthetic or surgical risk. This is strongly recommended for ALL patients undergoing anesthesia and surgery.

_____ I accept pre-anesthetic labwork (cost: \$66.00)

_____ I decline pre-anesthetic labwork and understand that my pet may have underlying disease that may go undetected

Therapeutic Laser Treatment: This treatment can be performed on your pet's incision(s) postoperatively to reduce pain and aid in the healing process on a cellular level.

_____ I elect therapeutic laser treatment for my pet (cost: \$13.50)

_____ I decline therapeutic laser treatment

Microchip Permanent Identification: A microchip is a means of permanent identification that is implanted under the skin. If your pet is lost, your pet may be reconnected to you via the use of a chip scanner (most veterinary clinics, shelters and rescue organizations have one of these scanners).

_____ I elect to have my pet microchipped (cost: \$51.75)

_____ I decline microchipping

Consent for Anesthesia and Surgery

I, the undersigned, am the owner or authorized agent of the pet listed below, and am at least 18 years of age. I elect to have this pet undergo the anesthetic and surgical procedure listed below, and declare that I understand the procedure along with associated benefits and risks (up to and including death) as outlined above, and I have had the opportunity to have my questions regarding the procedure answered.

Client Name (print): _____ Client Signature: _____

Pet's Name: _____ Date: _____

Species: _____ Date of Birth: _____ Sex: _____

Surgical Procedure(s): _____

Additional Services:

Phone number where you can be reached today: _____

My pet has had food withheld for a minimum of 8 hour: Yes _____ No _____

My pet's current medications/supplements:	Dose	Last given
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Veterinarian Name: _____

Veterinarian/Technician Signature: _____ Date: _____