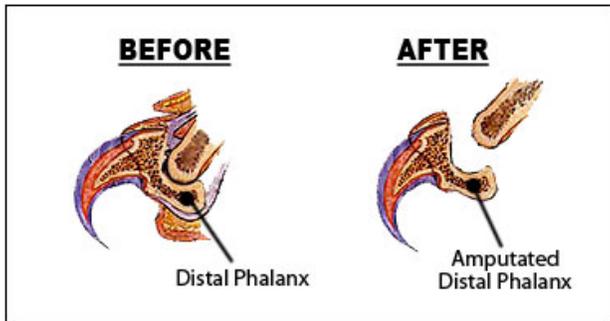


Feline Spay and Declaw Surgery

An ovariectomy (spay) is the surgical removal of the female reproductive organs (the two ovaries, the uterine horns and the body of the uterus).

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.



Both procedures in cats requires general anesthesia to induce complete unconsciousness. The cat will receive a pre-anesthetic sedative-analgesic drug (pain reliever) to help her relax. An IV (intravenous) catheter would be placed at this time to administer fluids and medications. A breathing tube is placed in the windpipe, and then an inhalation (gas) anesthesia in oxygen is used during the actual surgery. With the cat lying on her back, the hair is clipped over the abdomen and the skin is scrubbed with surgical soap to disinfect the area. A local nerve block is used to aid in pain control for the declaw. The cat is then moved into our surgery suite where another sterile scrub is performed. A sterile drape is placed over the spay surgical site. A surgical laser is used to incise the skin at the middle of the abdomen, and then the abdominal cavity is opened. The organs of

the female reproductive tract are identified and the major blood vessels supplying the ovaries and the uterus are ligated (tied off). This must be done before these organs can be removed. Sutures (stitches) that dissolve over time are used to tie off the blood vessels and also to close the uterus above the cervix. The abdominal incision is then closed with one or two layers of sutures (stitches). The skin is often closed with sutures under the skin that do not need to be removed. If skin sutures or staples are used they need to be removed in 14 days. The surgical laser is used for the declaw 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 for the declaw they will not need to be removed because they are dissolvable.

The procedure takes about 60-90 minutes to perform in most cases, including the time needed for preparation and anesthesia. In older cats the procedure can take longer and may increase the risk of bleeding and postoperative complications.

The *benefits* of the spay surgery include: elimination of heat cycles, elimination of pet's ability to become pregnant, reduced risk of reproductive cancers (mammary, ovarian, and uterine) and elimination of the risk of pyometra (uterine infection which can be life threatening).

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, bleeding (hemorrhage) ranging from mild to severe, postoperative infection and wound breakdown (dehiscence) over the incision as well as swelling or seroma at the site. The overall complication rate is low, but serious complications can result in death or the need for additional surgery at owner's expense.

The cat remains in the hospital for 2 days post-surgery where 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 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, like Yesterday's News, should 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.

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:	<u>Dose</u>	<u>Last given</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Veterinarian Name: _____

Veterinarian/Technician Signature: _____ Date: _____