

East End Veterinary Medical Centre

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Declawing in Cats (Onychectomy)

Client Handout

General Information:

Scratching with the front claws is normal, instinctive behavior for cats. The purpose of this activity is to remove old, worn fragments of nails. Though scratching is normal for cats, this behavior can be destructive and costly in the home. For many cat owners, declawing is the only solution.

A declawed cat should be confined indoors, since the claws are its primary means of defense. A house cat has little need for defense and is a more suitable pet since it can no longer ruin furnishing or scratch people.

Surgical Procedure:

Declawing (onychectomy) is performed under general anesthesia and consists of surgical removal of the nail bed. The feet are usually bandaged, and the cat may be hospitalized briefly. After the bandages are removed your pet will be able to walk normally, though tenderness may be evident for up to 1 week.

Home Care:

1) **Exercise:**

Restricting exercise is difficult, however, you should prevent your pet from jumping as much as possible for the first 5 days.

2) **Bleeding:**

Occasionally a cat breaks open one of the small scabs where the nail was removed. A few drops of blood followed by rapid cessation of bleeding is normal. Call the doctor if bleeding persists. You can wrap your pet's feet with a paper towel and masking tape to apply pressure.

3) **Litter Box:**

He/She has most likely been sent home with Yesterdays' News cat litter. This is made from recycled newspapers and should be used for a week to 10 days in place of regular litter. This will help to prevent you pet from developing an infection! (If this litter was NOT sent home, shredded newspaper is a good substitute).

4) **Pain Medication:**

If medication has been sent home, follow the instructions given at the time of discharge and on the prescription bottle label.

5) << **Do NOT make him/her walk up or down steps to get to his/her food or litter box!** >>

Notify the Doctor if any of the following occur:

- 1) Your pet's feet appear swollen or bleed frequently.
- 2) Your pet is reluctant to walk.
- 3) There is a change in your pet's general health or behavior.

Thank you for trusting us with the care of your pet!
The staff of East End Veterinary Medical Centre