



Brookville Road Animal Hospital

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Home Care Instructions

- Restrict activity for 7 days. He/she should be inside during this time, and not allowed to run or play with other pets.
- An e-collar should be worn for 5-7 days if he/she tries to lick at the incision.
- Monitor incisions for swelling and discharge. Expect the area to be slightly red and swollen for a few days. If excessive swelling or discharge is noted, or if he/she is consistently holding up a paw for more than a few days, please come in for recheck examination.
- No suture removal is required – all sutures are absorbable and under the skin.
- He/she can be offered her normal food tonight.

THE PET HEALTH LIBRARY

By Wendy C. Brooks, DVM, DipABVP

Educational Director, VeterinaryPartner.com

Feline Spay FAQ

Spaying your cat is an important part of basic cat health care. Spaying at a young age prevents mammary cancer and spaying at any age prevents unwanted kittens, noisy heat cycles, and possibly even urine marking in the house. The following is a list of frequently asked questions gleaned from years of veterinary practice as well as from answering questions online. We have found that even though the cat spay is a routine and a commonly performed procedure, many pet owners still have questions. Hopefully, this FAQ will be helpful.



What is actually removed during spaying?

Spaying is an ovariectomy, which means that both the ovaries and the uterus are removed. The cervix is tied off, leaving the vagina to end in a blind sac. Since it is the ovaries that are responsible for the heat cycles, possible mammary tumor development, and behavior problems, it is crucial that the ovaries be removed intact; some veterinarians will leave the uterus behind, though, it is generally regarded as best to remove the entire tract, uterus included.

Feline reproductive tract after removal. Note the uterus as two horns forming a Y shape. The ovaries are located at the end of the arms of the Y. The cervix is at the base of the Y.

Will she have stitches?

Some veterinarians always place skin stitches. Some veterinarians never place skin stitches and prefer to close the incision with "buried" stitches that are internal. The spay incision is closed in several layers (the abdominal muscles, the tissue under the skin, and the skin itself may all be closed separately). Skin stitches necessitate a return visit for a recheck, which is always a good idea after an abdominal surgery. Obviously, it may be more convenient for the owner not to have to make a return trip and it may be simpler not to have to worry about the cat pulling out her skin stitches and causing herself injury.



What can I expect regarding recovery period/incision care?

One of the advantages of keeping cats overnight after spaying is that they usually go bouncing out of the hospital as if nothing has happened. Some cats will not eat for the first day or so but if she does not seem back to normal by the day following discharge, we would like to know about it.

Cats discharged on the same day as surgery may experience more soreness if not confined to a small area. Food and water are generally withheld until the next day or late that night and she should be kept quiet and not allowed outside. Cats should not be discharged while still groggy in any way from anesthesia as they are a danger to themselves and to their human handlers.

Later in the recovery period, it is not unusual to notice swelling at the incision site. Cats often react this way to internal sutures and this kind of swelling is common and resolves spontaneously. Such swellings are firm and there is no fluid drainage or bleeding from the incision. They generally resolve in 3 to 4 weeks. Any fluid drainage from the incision is abnormal and if possible the cat should be rechecked by the veterinarian who performed the spay.

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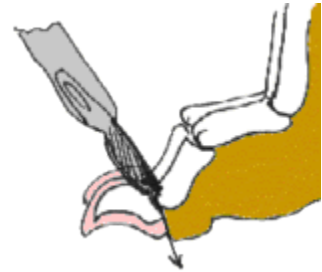
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Declawing and Its Alternatives

The Disarticulation Method

This procedure is a bit more difficult to master as it involves the delicate disconnection of all the tiny ligaments holding the third bone in place. The entire third bone is removed.



What to Expect / Possible Complications

- Because the entire third bone is removed, there is a zero possibility of the claw growing back; however, the cut ligaments allow for a subtle drop in the way the foot is held. Most owners do not notice this change in posture.
- One to two nights in the hospital are required for this procedure.
- Some spotting of blood from the toes is normal during the first few days at home (beware of this with white carpeting).
- Shredded paper or pelleted recycled newspaper litter (such as Yesterday's News®) is recommended for 10 days after surgery. Conventional clay or sand litters can impact the tiny incisions and cause infections.
- Pain medication is a good idea, especially for larger or older cats. The amount of weight carried on the feet (the size of the cat) is the biggest factor in post-operative pain.

Myths and Rumors: What People Hear about Declawing

MYTH #1: *After declawing, a cat is likely to become fearful or experience behavior changes, impairing an affectionate relationship with his owner.*

Numerous scientific studies have been unable to document any behavior changes post-declaw. In fact, in one survey 70% of owners of declawed cats reported an improved relationship with their cat after the procedure.

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MYTH #2: *A declawed cat cannot climb trees.*

Declawed cats are not as effective at climbing trees as cats with claws but declawing does not prevent tree climbing.

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MYTH #3: *A declawed cat cannot catch prey.*

Declawed cats are not as effective at catching prey as cats with claws but declawing does not prevent effective hunting.

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MYTH #4: *A declawed cat has lost its ability to defend itself and should not be allowed outside.*

This one is true. Without claws, a cat has indeed lost an important part of his defense system. I feel strongly that declawed cats should be housed indoors only.

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MYTH #5: *Declawed cats are more likely to bite since they can no longer claw.*

Declawed cats do not seem to realize they have no claws. They will continue to scratch ineffectively as if they did not know the difference. Studies have shown no increased biting tendency after declawing.

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MYTH #6: *The post-operative period involves tremendous pain.*

The declawed cat will indeed have sore feet after surgery. The larger the cat, the more discomfort there is and reluctance to bear weight. Pain relievers are often prescribed. However, this recovery period should not last longer than a week or so. Healing should be complete by two weeks. Pain after this recovery period is not normal or expected in any way and if a declawed cat seems to be uncomfortable or lame, a recheck appointment is definitely needed.

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MYTH #7: *A declawed cat will not use a litter box again.*

It is important that litter not get impacted in the declaw incisions during the recovery period. Shredded paper is the usual recommendation during recovery and some cats simply will not use shredded paper. The recycled newspaper litters are an excellent alternative. The only litter problem you might expect would not accepting a new litter during the recovery period. Declawed cats do not lose their litter box instinct.