

Columbus Countryside Veterinary Clinic
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Declawing of Cats

The purpose of this note is to update you all on the status of declawing of cats in our clinic. As of January 1, 2023 we will no longer be offering front or rear paw declawing for cats, unless there is a medical necessity.

As you may or may not be aware, the process of surgical declawing, or onychectomy, is a permanent procedure which amputates the toe at the last knuckle of each toe on the foot that is having the procedure. Cats, unlike dogs, do not use their last knuckle while walking, but must extend the knuckle and nail when the nails are to be used. The process of declawing not only impacts this ability, but also may cause long-term damage to the tendons, ligaments, and nerves, and at times may cause life-long issues with walking. They do not grow these nails back, as bone is amputated and removed from the toe. The cats are also more likely to deal with infections and incision issues soon after surgery, as they are walking on the incisions and using the litter box with their incisions.

There is also a known correlation between cats who have been declawed and an increase in inappropriate elimination (urinating outside of the litter box), which means by declawing cats, you are potentially inviting a much more damaging and expensive set of problems.

The procedure has been steadily losing favor in not only the veterinary community, but also with pet owners overall. In fact, as close as Madison, Wisconsin, it is banned, as well as in numerous other communities throughout the United States and across the globe. The American Association of Feline Practitioners, AAFP does not allow this surgery to be performed in clinics that are certified as Feline Friendly. As veterinarians, we foresee a future very soon where declawing will be banned in all circumstances except when medically necessary.

We will work with you to help you understand the use of many different tools and techniques to help prevent clawing of furniture, etc. This includes cat scratching aids like posts and other stands and boxes, cat trees, nail trimming, and even nail caps.

We will welcome your questions regarding declawing. If there happen to be scheduled declawing surgeries which are scheduled to take place after January 1st, we will still perform that surgery, but there will be no new added procedures to take place after January 1st. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,
Carla Twardowski, DVM
Medical Director