

Feline Behavior Questionnaire & Information

Owner's Name: _____

Patient's Name: _____

Sex: Male Female & Neutered/Spayed

Age: _____

Indian Head Animal Hospital strongly encourages client education prior to consideration of onychectomy (declawing). It is our obligation to provide cat owners with a complete education with regard to the normal scratching behavior of cats, the procedure itself, as well as potential risks to the patient.

HISTORY	1) How long have you owned this cat?	
	a. Was this cat adopted/purchased/ found ?	
	b. Do you have any known history about your pet before obtaining cat? Brief summary	
	2) How many other pets are in the household?	
	3) Does your cat go outside?	
	4) In the future will your cat go outside ? Does your cat like to "escape"?	
	5) Why do you want to declaw your cat? Any special considerations/reasons?	
	6) Have you tried any behavioral modification? Scratching posts/ scratching areas/ pheromones/ Soft Paws/ medication/ other?	
7) If you have problems with furniture destroying where exactly are they destroying it?		
8) Are there any new animals that have been introduced to the house or any new animals (strays) that your cat can see outside?		
BEHAVIOR	9) Does your cat ever or currently urinate or defecate outside the litter box? Describe	
	10) How often per day/per week do you interact with your cat in a play type environment (i.e. playing with toys, laser pointer, other)?	
RECORDS	11) We prefer to establish a long term relationship with pets we perform surgeries on; will you be following up for routine care with us? If you already have a veterinarian you take your pet to for routine care please give us name so we may forward records.	

Onychectomy is an amputation and should be regarded as a major surgery. Declawing of domestic cats should be considered only after attempts have been made to prevent the cat from using its claws destructively or when its clawing presents an above normal health risk for its owner(s).

Does declawing cause impairment of normal behavior? Because scratching is a normal feline behavior, opponents state that declawing causes emotional stress when the animal cannot scratch. However, between 59 and 78% of declawed cats will continue to exhibit scratching behavior with a normal appearance. Critics also claim that declawing adversely affects balance, climbing, and feline social interactions. Because scratching is considered a means of stretching and using the muscles of the forelimbs, shoulders, and torso, it has been suggested that declawing eliminates the normal isometric resistance associated with the claws pulling against a stationary surface and so may produce weakening of these muscles. Neither clinical evidence nor anecdotal reports to support this assertion have been reported to date.

Incidence of problem behavior after declawing - Opponents of the procedure state that declawing increases undesirable behaviors, including inappropriate elimination and biting. Empirical studies show that behavioral changes may occur, but do not provide strong support for a net increase in problem behaviors. Several studies suggest that there is no strong evidence that declawing increases the risk of undesirable behaviors or decreases the observance of desirable behaviors.

The following points are the foundation for full understanding and disclosure regarding declawing:

- Scratching is a normal feline behavior, is a means for cats to mark their territory both visually and with scent, and is used for claw conditioning ("husk" removal) and stretching activity.
- Owners should provide suitable implements for normal scratching behavior. Examples are scratching posts, cardboard boxes, lumber or logs, and carpet or fabric remnants affixed to stationary objects. Implements should be tall or long enough to allow full stretching, and be firmly anchored to provide necessary resistance to scratching. Cats should be positively reinforced in the use of these implements.
- Appropriate claw care (consisting of trimming the claws every 1 to 2 weeks) should be provided to prevent injury or damage to household items.
- Temporary synthetic nail caps are available as an alternative to onychectomy to prevent human injury or damage to property. Plastic nail caps are usually applied every 4 to 6 weeks.
- Declawed cats should be housed indoors and allowed outside only under direct supervision.
- Scientific data do indicate that cats that have destructive scratching behavior are more likely to be euthanized, or more readily relinquished, released, or abandoned, thereby contributing to the homeless cat population. Where scratching behavior is an issue as to whether or not a particular cat can remain as an acceptable household pet in a particular home, surgical onychectomy may be considered.
- Surgical declawing is not a medically necessary procedure for the cat in most cases. While rare in occurrence, there are inherent risks and complications with any surgical procedure including, but not limited to:
 - Anesthetic complications
 - Hemorrhage - most commonly reported complication of declawing (can last up to 14 days)
 - Claw regrowth - Occurs in roughly 3% of declawed cats and results in abscess formation and pain
 - Wound dehiscence - Occurs in roughly 17% of declawed cats
 - Paralysis - usually transient, and normal function is often regained in 5 to 30 days
 - Infection
 - Pain
- Pain management and laser are necessary (not elective) and required for this procedure.

I certify that I am the legal possessor or I am acting on the authority of the legal possessor of the animal described above.

Signature

Date