

# ANIMAL HOSPITAL OF LANESVILLE

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## Declawing Your Cat

By Dr. Rene Wingerter

Whether or not to have your cat declawed is a big decision. Since the procedure is permanent and does carry a small risk of chronic discomfort for your pet, you should take the time to ask yourself some questions first.

1. Am I sure that this cat will never become an outdoor cat? If there is a chance he will go outdoors even occasionally, then you need to reconsider this procedure.
2. Am I having my cat declawed for the right reasons? Declawing will only prevent the claws from scratching the furniture, it will not keep an aggressive cat from hurting someone or teach a kitten to not play so rough. These are behavior problems that can only be controlled by training, possibly with help from an expert.
3. Have I tried other options to train my cat to leave my furniture alone? First invest in a \$10.00 cardboard, catnip scented scratching pad and place it by your cat's favorite target. You may also want to try trimming the nails every 2 weeks or so.

A declaw is called an onchectomy. It is the surgical removal of the entire claw, including the small bone attached to it. This is done under general anesthesia using sterile instruments. The small incisions are usually closed using a tissue adhesive which is like "super glue" produced for medical purposes only. After the cat goes home, he should not be allowed to dig in dirt, gravel or regular cat litter for 10 days. A pelleted typed litter or even shredded newspaper should be used during this time to prevent infection.

When deciding whether or not to declaw your cat, it is best to do what will make you and your pet happiest. If you will enjoy your cat more and be less likely to give him away or put him outside if he is declawed, then surgery would be the best alternative. If you plan to put your cat outside some anyway or you may give him away, it would be wise to think it over for a while before having the surgery done.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to call us at the Animal Hospital of Lanesville at 952-3643. 🐾