

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 normal for cats, this behavior can be destructive and costly in the house. For many cat owners, declawing is a solution. A declawed cat should be confined indoors, since claws are its primary means of defense. A house cat has little need for defense and is a more suitable pet because it can no longer ruin furnishings or scratch people.

Declawing (onychectomy) is performed under general anesthesia and consists of surgical removal of the nail bed. The feet are bandaged and the cat is hospitalized briefly. After the bandages are removed, your pet will be able to walk normally, though tenderness may be evident for a few days. The sutures in each toe will dissolve and do not need to be removed.

Important Points To Remember

1. Restricting exercise is difficult. However, you should prevent your cat from jumping as much as possible for the first 5 days.
2. 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.
3. Replace the normal cat litter with torn strips of newspaper or styrofoam peanuts for 5-7 days.

Notify the Doctor if any of the following occur:

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



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