

# Tails Docking & Dewclaw Removal

## General Information

Tail docking, or surgical shortening of the tail, is performed for any of 3 reasons: to comply with established breed standards, to improve the animal's appearance, or to treat injury or disease. The dewclaws are the small nails located on the inside of the front paws and occasionally the rear paws. Since these claws do not touch the ground, they do not wear down. If they are not regularly trimmed, they may curl around and grow into the foot. The dewclaws are prone to injury because of their location and should be removed in hunted and working breeds. They are usually removed in such breeds as Poodles and Schnauzers to improve appearance.

## Home Care of Puppies 3-5 Days Old

1. When the puppies return home after their surgery, allow them to nurse until they are full, then remove them from their mother for 1/2 hour. Repeat this process two more times and then let them stay with the mother. This is to reduce the amount of time the mother spends licking the surgery sites right after surgery.
2. Check the sites daily for 1 week to make sure the mother does not chew the sutures. The sutures are dissolvable and will fall out in time.
3. Keep the sleeping area very clean so that the surgery sites do not become infected. This is particularly important the first few days after surgery.

## Home Care of Older Dogs

1. Allow only minimal outdoor activity until the wound is healed and the sutures have been removed. This is to prevent your pet from contaminating the wound before proper healing has occurred.
2. The bandages need to remain dry and should be removed in 1 week.
3. Check the wound frequently to make sure your pet does not chew the sutures. Your pet's sutures will be removed in 10-14 days. Please call the clinic before coming in.
4. Notify the doctor if any of the following occur:
  - Your pet chews or pulls out the sutures
  - There is bleeding or swelling at the incision
  - The wound is draining or partially open



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