

## **Feline Onychectomy**

### Declaw

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Feline onychectomy, or declaw, is the removal of the third bone (phalanx) of each digit of the foot, usually reserved for the front feet. Complications of the procedure may include bleeding, infection, and pain. There may be acute pain (around the time of surgery and during the immediate postoperative healing process) as well as chronic pain (long-term pain). There can also be complications from the bandages that are wrapped around the cat's feet; if wrapped too tightly or left on too long, the bandages can act as tourniquets, restricting blood flow to the feet and causing severe injury. In rare instances, the entire nail is not removed and may have some regrowth; it may regrow at an altered anatomic angle. Other complications associated with anesthesia may include short-term vomiting or diarrhea, ileus (decreased gut motility or decreased movement of food in the intestines), and death. At Pickrell Veterinary Clinic, the most common complications that we see involve opening of the skin of the toes after surgery from the cat licking and chewing at the surgical site(s); should this occur, the cat will have a mandatory Cone of Shame (e-collar) after the toes are repaired.

### **Home Care Instructions**

→Most declaw patients with an uneventful convalescence will be fully recovered in 2 weeks (the amount of time for full depth skin incisions to heal). Usually progress exams and follow up appointments are not necessary.

→To reduce the possibility of postoperative swelling and infection, it is imperative that the surgical site be kept clean and dry for at least a week, during which time your cat will need to have shredded newspaper for litter or recycled newspaper pelleted litter, etc. Clay litter and clumping litter - traditional litter with the little particles - can get stuck in the toes and create opportunity for infection and delay healing.

→Your pet should also be prevented from excessive licking or chewing at the surgical sites for about a week. If an e-collar (Cone of Shame) is needed, please see the front desk staff. If your cat rips or chews open its toes, please call. Your cat will be sent home with a mandatory Cone of Shame after the toes are repaired.

→Please examine the paws about twice a day for 10 days; if excessive swelling, redness, pain, or discharge is noted, please contact us at Pickrell Veterinary Clinic.

→If there are any general signs of illness (i.e. vomiting, diarrhea, lack of energy, lack of appetite, fever (greater than 102.5), pale gums and/or mucous membranes) or pain (excessive swelling, swelling higher up on the paw, reluctance to put weight on the foot, limping, increased vocalization, reduced activity), please do not hesitate to call. There may be mild vomiting or diarrhea for a day or so after anesthesia. Mature cats may be slower for several days as they recover from this major surgery. If there are any questions, please do not hesitate to call.

Thank you for bringing your pet to the Pickrell Veterinary Clinic  
*Quality Care You Can Count On!*