

# Osceola Veterinary Declaw Guidelines

Cats will only be considered for front paw declaw if they are BOTH:

- Under 1 year of age
- 8.9lbs or less

If your cat is older or larger than these guidelines, we will not be able to declaw them at this clinic. This is to help protect your cat from negative side effects of declawing, which are often amplified if done when they are older/larger than our recommendations.

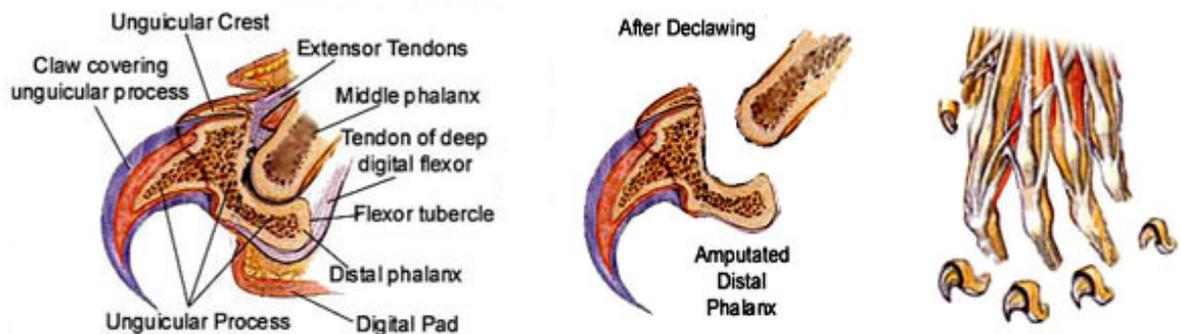
Possible Declaw Side Effects:

- **Litter box aversion:** After being declawed, they are very painful – even with appropriate pain medications on board. Because of this, when they use the litter box to dig, it amplifies that pain. They will often relate the pain response to the litter box itself, leading to them urinating/defecating inappropriately outside of the box. This is sometimes temporary and other times permanent.
- **Increased biting:** Cats know when their claws are removed. To make up for this loss of protection, they often start biting more frequently. Sometimes it is all related to play time, other times it is random and can become quite serious.
- **Chronic or “Ghost” pain:** Like human amputees, sometimes the amputation sites can be painful for extended periods of time. This leads to an odd or painful sensation and alters the way your cat walks. If we are lucky, we can alleviate this discomfort through use of extended pain management, but other times it does not improve. In these cases, your cat will have a limp that is constant and potentially life long.

For older and larger cats, we also tend to see difficulty healing. They often must be re-sedated to repair their declaw sites. This is because of their weight and the increased stress put on their amputation sites immediately after surgery.

The American Veterinary Medical Association’s (AVMA) stance on declawing is below.

*“The AVMA discourages declawing of domestic cats as an elective procedure. The Association encourages the use of alternatives but says professional judgment is key when making a decision as to whether to declaw a*



Adapted from: Atlas of Feline Anatomy for Veterinarians; Hudson/Hamilton, W.B. Saunders Company