

ELECTIVE SURGERIES



Spaying and Neutering

Unless you are breeding purebred cats you will want to have your kitten spayed (if female) or neutered (if male). Millions of unwanted kittens are put to death in this country every year because there aren't enough homes for them all. Further, spayed or neutered cats live many years longer.

Almost all female cats that are not spayed will develop either mammary (breast) cancer or a uterine infection called pyometra. Both of these diseases are fatal. Spaying before a kitten goes into heat completely removes these risks. Additionally, female cats in heat are noisy and troublesome to live with.

Male cats want to roam in search of female cats in heat. If you don't allow them outside they will usually do their best to escape. While outdoors, they fight with other male cats. These traits lead to high death rates from being run over by cars, fight wounds and contagious illnesses such as feline leukemia. Outdoor tom cats frequently disappear and are never seen again by their owners. Indoor intact (not neutered) male cats have very foul-smelling urine and often spray that urine onto walls and furniture.

Spaying and neutering are typically done between the ages of five and six months. The goal is to get the surgery done before a female kitten goes into her first heat or a male kitten starts spraying urine. Your cat will be a happier, healthier pet and you will have done your part to reduce pet overpopulation.

While your kitten is anesthetized we can also place a microchip, so if he or she ever escapes or is lost there is a better chance you will be able to get your new friend back. Other optional items you will need to decide on when your pet comes in for surgery include pre-anesthetic ECG screening, surgery and therapy laser use, and nail trimming.

Declawing

Fewer and fewer veterinary hospitals are still performing declaws. Amputating the last digit of each toe is not a benign procedure. Declawing is the only surgery where a patient is expected to walk around on its surgery sites afterwards, so the risk of complications such as infection is higher than for other procedures. Many cats develop behavioral problems after declawing, such as biting and litter box avoidance. Many end up with chronic pain in their feet.

At Best Friends, we struggled over the issue of declawing for many years. On the one hand, it was everyone's least favorite surgery and not one any of us would ever consider doing for our own cats. On the other hand, if cat owners were going to declaw we wanted to do it here, so we could provide the best pain management and surgical technique possible, to avoid long term behavioral issues and chronic pain.

The decision not to provide declawing was made for us in 2020, when we could no longer maintain membership in feline medicine organizations while still offering declawing surgery. So, we no longer offer this surgery.



Newt is wearing Soft Paws nail caps, an alternative to declawing