

MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT CAT DECLAWING

MYTH #1: AFTER DECLAWING, A CAT IS LIKELY TO BECOME FEARFUL OR EXPERIENCE BEHAVIOR CHANGES IMPAIRING AN AFFECTIONATE RELATIONSHIP WITH ITS OWNER

FACT: Declawing causes no increase in behavior problems. ^{1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6} A study of found declawing successfully met or surpassed cat owner expectations. ¹ 96% reported complete satisfaction and over 70% of the cat owners indicated an improvement in the cat-owner relationship. ¹



MYTH #2: A DECLAWED CAT CANNOT CLIMB TREES

FACT: Declawing does not prevent tree climbing. 40% of cat owners reported allowing their declawed cats outside, even after being advised not to do so and stated these cats still climbed trees, hunted, and successfully defended themselves against other cats and dogs. ^{1, 2}



MYTH #3: A DECLAWED CAT CANNOT CATCH PREY.

FACT: Studies found declawing does not prevent effective hunting. ^{1, 2}

MYTH #4: A DECLAWED CAT LOSES ITS ABILITY TO DEFEND ITSELF AND SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED OUTSIDE

FACT: Studies found declawed cats still hunt and successfully defend themselves against other cats and dogs. ^{1, 2}



MYTH #5: DECLAWED CATS ARE MORE LIKELY TO BITE SINCE THEY CAN NO LONGER CLAW

FACT: In a study of over 850 cats, declawed cats were no more likely to bite than clawed cats. ⁴



MYTH #6: THE POST-OPERATIVE PERIOD INVOLVES TREMENDOUS PAIN.

FACT: Veterinarians are now able to make recovery from declaw surgery easier by using medication to control post-surgical pain. Despite short-term pain and discomfort, there is no scientific data to support claims declawing has any long-term negative effects on a cat's health and well-being. ^{1, 2, 8}

MYTH #7: A DECLAWED CAT WILL NOT USE A LITTER BOX AGAIN

FACT: Declawed cats do not lose their litter box instinct. While some cats may not like using the strips of newspaper veterinarians recommend placing in the litter box temporarily after surgery, there is no evidence declawing causes long-term litter box problems.¹



MYTH #8: A DECLAW BAN WILL NOT HURT CATS

FACT: 50% of owners of declawed cats state they would not have kept their cats had they not been declawed.² This is consistent with other studies that examined reasons for surrendering a cat to an animal shelter. Behavior problems (including scratching) is a major reason for surrender,⁵ while being declawed decreased the risk of relinquishment.⁶



MYTH #9: A DECLAW BAN IS COST NEUTRAL TO THE CITY

AVMA formula estimates 193,058 cats in the City of San Francisco.⁹ **25% (48,264) of these cats are declawed.**¹⁰ **50% (24,132) of these cats would be relinquished if declawing was not an option.**² **A Declaw Ban could cost the City of San Francisco \$4,711,290.**¹¹



1 Landsberg G. Cat owners' attitudes toward declawing. Anthrozoos, 4:3, p. 192, 1991

2 Landsberg G. Declawing is controversial but still saves pets, a veterinarian survey. Veterinary Forum, September 1991

3 Bennett M, Houpt KA, Erb HN: Effects of declawing on feline behavior. Comp Animal Pract 2:7, 1988

4 Borchelt PL, Voith VL. Aggressive behavior in cats. Compend Contin Educ Vet Pract 1;9, p. 49, 1987

Morgan M, Houpt KA. Feline behavior problems. The influence of declawing. Anthrozoos, 3:1, p. 50, 1989

5 Patronek GJ, Glickman LT, Beck AM, et al. Risk factors for relinquishment of cats to an animal shelter. J Am Vet Med Assoc, vol. 209, 3, 582-588, 1996

6 Miller DD, Staats SR, Partlo C, Rada K. Factors associated with the decision to surrender a pet to an animal shelter. J Am Vet Med Assoc, 209, 4, 738-742, 1996

7 In 1992, the Humane Society of the United States estimated the average life expectancy of free roaming pets to be between 3 and 5 years, while indoor cats can commonly reach ages of 17 years or more.

8 Daniel Estep, Ph.D. and Suzanne Hetts, Ph.D. The Declaw Controversy

9 AVMA ESTIMATE FORMULA FOR CATS: # of persons within your community divided by 2.67 = total number of households then # of households in the area you are estimating x 0.316 (percent of cat owners) = total number of cat owning households then # of cat owning households x 2.1 (mean number per household) = total cat population.

10 National Council on Pet Population Study and Policy found 25 percent of all cats in America are declawed

11 Surrender costs provided by LA Animal Services: fully loaded impound costs to owner-surrender a cat is \$22 - Fully burdened daily cat costs: Days 1-7 = \$26.01 per day and Days 8+ = \$13.16 per day. The average stay for a cat at LA Animal Services is 8 days, or \$195.23. These figures may need to be modified for the City of San Francisco.