

Dedicated professionals and volunteers caring for the many stray and unwanted dogs and cats of Fulton County.



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Our Mission Statement

The James A. Brennan Memorial Humane Society is a non-profit, compassionate organization devoted to securing permanent, responsible, loving homes for the animals of Fulton County. The organization strives to achieve its mission through education and prevention of animal suffering.

This shelter serves the Fulton County community in many ways:

- 1. Provides shelter, food, water, medical care and safety to stray, homeless and unwanted cats and dogs.*
- 2. Helps families find new animal companion.*
- 3. Returns lost pets to their owners.*
- 4. Teaches humane education in schools, kindness towards animals: safety around animals, the link between animal cruelty and violence against humans and builds self-confidence.*
- 5. Has the most aggressive Spay/Neuter Program for low-income families in Fulton County.*
- 6. Pet Food Bank for Seniors in Fulton County, helping seniors with financial difficulties feeding their companions.*
- 7. Girl Scouts merit badge programs.*
- 8. Alternative School Program, providing work-study opportunities for students.*
- 9. Advocates for Animal Law at the State and Federal levels.*

Perhaps most importantly the Brennan Humane Society provides a tangible example of humane ethics and compassion for all living

Declawing Cats: More Than Just a Manicure

People choose to declaw their cats for a number of reasons: some are frustrated with shredded drapes or furniture, some are worried about being scratched, and others simply feel that a declawed cat is easier to live with.

In many cases, cats are declawed preemptively, as a part of a spay/neuter package offered by veterinarians, even before claw-related problems occur.

Not a Simple Surgery

Too often people believe that declawing is a simple surgery that removes a cat's nails—the equivalent of a person having her fingernails trimmed. Sadly, this is far from the truth. Declawing traditionally involves the amputation of the last bone of each toe and, if performed on a human being, it would be comparable to cutting off each finger at the last knuckle.

Declawing can leave cats with a painful healing process, long-term health issues, and numerous behavior problems. This is especially unfortunate because declawing is an owner-elected procedure and unnecessary for the vast majority of cats.

What about Laser Declawing?

During laser surgery, a small, intense beam of light cuts through tissue by heating and vaporizing it, meaning there's less bleeding and a shorter recovery time. But the surgical technique itself is similar to the traditional method (or "onychectomy"), with the laser simply replacing a steel scalpel blade. So while the use of a laser may slightly reduce the duration of the healing process, it does not change the nature of the procedure.

Tenectomy

Another procedure introduced more recently effectively deactivates cats' claws by severing the tendons that extend the toes. Called a "tendonectomy," the surgery retains the claws in the paws and is often thought to be more humane because of its shorter recovery time.

But the method has its own set of problems. Because cats are unable to keep their claw length in check through vigorous scratching, owners must continually trim nails to prevent them from growing into the paw pads and causing infections. And though tendonectomies are generally considered less traumatic because of decreased post-operative pain, a 1998 study published in the *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association* found the incidence of bleeding, lameness, and infection was similar for both procedures. Furthermore, the American Veterinary Medical Association does not recommend tendonectomies as an alternative.

Unnecessary Procedures

While there have been changes in the way that cats are declawed, it's still true that for the majority of cats, these surgical procedures are unnecessary. Educated owners can easily train their cats to use their claws in a manner that allows animal and owner to happily coexist.

Declawing and tendonectomies should be reserved only for those rare cases in which a cat has a medical problem that would warrant such surgery, such as the need to remove cancerous nail bed tumors. Declawing a cat does not guarantee that the animal will not be relinquished to a shelter or euthanized. Declawed cats may develop other problem behaviors, such as biting or litter box avoidance, and end up being surrendered to a shelter anyway.

Scratching That Itch

Purchasing or building a scratching post is an important step in training a cat to avoid destructive scratching. Several companies manufacture scratching posts and other products that appeal to cats. Some companies and organizations have developed similar plans for do-it-yourselfers. Here's a sampling of the products out there:

Felix Katnip Tree Company
206-547-0042
www.felixkatnipcompany.com

Homemade Cat Ladder
www.caws.org

How to Build a Scratching Post
www.catsinternational.org

The Scratch Absorber
www.catspecialtiesbyzoey.com

Other Resources

Sticky Paws
1-888-697-2873
www.stickypaws.com

Soft Paws
1-800-989-2542
www.softpaws.com