



COSMETIC PROCEDURES IN ANIMALS: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

What are some examples of cosmetic procedures in animals?

The most common cosmetic procedures in dogs are tail docking and ear cropping. Likewise, declawing cats is often considered a cosmetic procedure.

Should animals undergo cosmetic procedures?

Any non-essential procedure can be harmful for animals. In the case of cosmetic procedures, your pet will likely be placed under anesthesia, which carries inherent risk. Recovery from surgery can also be painful and last for weeks or more. For example, animals who undergo ear cropping procedures often need their ears taped and re-taped for months, an uncomfortable experience that requires activity and play restrictions. Additionally, many animals develop infections and other complications after surgery, leading to further discomfort, treatment, and veterinary costs.

What is the history of cosmetic procedures in animals?

Initially, people performed tail docking and ear cropping procedures on the grounds of preventing or treating certain medical conditions. For example, it was once believed that cropping a dog's ears would prevent ear infections, but research has shown little to no evidence to support this. Additionally, tail docking in dogs was originally performed by the ancient Romans because of the misguided assumption that it would prevent the rabies virus. Today, some people continue these elective procedures to meet arbitrary and harmful "breed standards."

Why is declawing cats particularly problematic?

Scratching is a natural and instinctive behavior for cats, as well as an important means of visual and olfactory communication. Moreover, declawing causes unnecessary, often lifelong pain for cats – the procedure is the equivalent of amputating a person's fingers at the last knuckle. Without the ability to claw, your cat's welfare will likely suffer and they may develop new and undesired behaviors. Instead of declawing your cat, the Dumb Friends League recommends spending time to direct this essential behavior to appropriate items, such as feline scratching posts, boards, and toys (vs. your sofa, for example).

What is the League's stance on cosmetic procedures?

The Dumb Friends League believes that all animals should be able to keep their ears, tails, and claws, and that these should only be removed or altered if medically necessary. Simply put, purely cosmetic procedures do more harm than good and do not help your pets live their best lives.