

Calgary Humane Society

Non-medical and Cosmetic Surgeries on Companion Animals

Position:

The Calgary Humane Society opposes the surgical alteration of companion animals for cosmetic and non-medical purposes. The Calgary Humane Society supports only those surgeries done to treat injuries or for reasons of health.

The CHS strongly recommends that breed associations remove cosmetic and non-medical surgeries from their breed standards and condemns tail-docking and ear-cropping as inhumane, unethical, and unnecessary.

Rationale:

- Cosmetic surgery causes unnecessary pain and suffering. Cosmetic surgery may lead to life-threatening complications such as infection and hemorrhage.
- Cosmetic surgery poses no benefit to companion animals and is sometimes ineffective in achieving the desired result.
- A number of veterinary associations have banned members from performing cosmetic surgeries and see these procedures as inhumane and unnecessary.
- Research indicates that because the tail is an important means of social communication for dogs, depriving a dog of its tail may have negative social effects on the dog.
- Several countries in Europe have banned tail docking.
- Some dogs have dew claws that may catch on objects, tearing the skin or perhaps even ripping off completely. Removing dew claws should never be done for merely cosmetic reasons. However, if removal is advised by a veterinarian, they should be removed by a veterinarian.
- The CHS opposes declawing of cats and recommends a number of other remedies to clawing behaviour. The surgery is a serious one, involving amputation of the last joint in the paw and can pose serious and painful complications to the cat (see further, CHS Position on Declawing of Cats).