

Declawing Your Cat:

A Special Interview with Dr. Jean Hofve

By Dr. Karen Becker

KB: Dr. Karen Becker

JH: Dr. Jean Hofve

KB: Hi, this is Dr. Karen Becker. Today I have a very special guest who I am interviewing by phone, Dr. Jean Hofve. We're going to talk about declawing in cats today. Dr. Jean earned her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine at Colorado State University in 1994. With further training and experience in homeopathy, homotoxicology, reiki, and flower essences, she practiced veterinary medicine in Denver, Colorado for many years. Now retired from practice, Dr. Jean is an author and a consultant.

She has written for many online and print publications, including the *Whole Dog Journal*, the *Journal of the American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association*, *Let's Live*, *Amazing Wellness*, and *Animal Wellness Magazine*. Dr. Jean co-authored *The Complete Guide to Holistic Cat Care: An Illustrated Handbook* with nutritionist Dr. Celeste Yarnall. She also just completed the *Paleo Dog*, which is a great new book and which will be listed in our Bookshelf section with a brief interview with her as well. The book is called *Paleo Dog: Give Your Best Friend a Long Life, Healthy Weight, and Freedom from Illness by Nurturing His Inner Wolf*. It will be available on June 3rd 2014 from Rodale Books.

Dr. Jean's award-winning website, LittleBigCat.com, which she founded in 2003 along with Jackson Galaxy, is a respected source of information on pet health, nutrition, and behavior. Welcome, Dr. Jean. Thanks for joining me.

JH: It's my pleasure.

KB: We have a really big topic to cover today. It's emotionally painful, it's physically painful, and there are a lot of misconceptions surrounding the topic of declawing.

I first learned about declawing when I went to vet school. I grew up with cats but none of them were declawed. I guess I never thought much about it until I went to vet school and had to learn how to do it, which was shocking, overwhelming, and mortifying all at once. I graduated in 1997; I don't feel at all that students at that time were being adequately prepped on the consequences of declawing or even on how to adequately perform a declawing if they are forced into doing that.

Talk to me about your thoughts pertaining to veterinarians getting adequate information in vet school about this really important topic. What are your thoughts?

JH: Well, when I was in vet school, we also had to declaw. I graduated in '94, so I'm a little bit ahead of you. Currently, two veterinary schools don't teach declawing at all. Those are Tufts University and Louisiana State University. At most of the other ones, it's an elective. The large-animal people are not going to take it and probably not all the small-animal people will either. Students may do one or two declaws during their whole four years of vet school. But there was a survey done that found that new graduates are expected to perform declaws on their first day at work.

KB: Goodness.

JH: It's appalling. There was never any discussion about consequences, side effects, complications, or any kind of aftercare. But they're still doing that. Vet students are not being told. I've talked to vet students at a couple of different schools. They have raised the issue, and the faculty doesn't agree with them. Certainly the other vet students aren't even interested in discussing the ethics of declawing.

KB: Wow. In your personal experience, when you graduated, did you perform a couple? Did you at least have some exposure? Or did you start in a private practice and you were told to do this but you decided to not? Tell me about your evolution on your views towards declawing. How did your perceptions evolve over time?

JH: It was a pretty abrupt evolution. The night before we were scheduled to do declawing in our surgical rotation, we had to watch the film. We had to watch the video of how it's done. That is true of every procedure: you watch the movie, and then the next day you will do it. The movie, I was horrified. I just remembered sitting there, thinking, "This is the most barbaric thing I've ever seen. Vets are supposed to be the good guys. What are we doing?" The longer I sat there, the more nauseated I became. I had to leave the room. I tell you, I lost my lunch. It was pretty horrible. But on my first day of work at the clinic, I was required to declaw. So, yes.

KB: My gosh. Okay. What a horror story. I mean, really, you had to be mortified. You were really learning and practicing a technique you had no desire to do on an animal that didn't want it done.

JH: Right. My boss, she believed and still does... We're still friends actually, but we're still arguing about declawing. She thinks it finds more homes for cats. More cats will get homes if we declaw. The facts are completely opposite of that. But she's not really interested in the facts, so it's very frustrating. But when you know that vets are inadequately trained on the procedure and most vets don't give adequate pain medication, there's a very high complication rate, like 80 percent with vet students. Most vets coming out are still students in this area. I mean, we're not doing a good job. Why are we doing it at all?

KB: Yup. Excellent point. For our readers or listeners who may be first-time kitty owners or don't have a whole lot of background pertaining to this subject, can you just give a really brief description of exactly what happens when a kitty is declawed so people have some idea? A lot of people erroneously assume it's a short nail trim but nothing could be further from the truth. Could you just give us a brief outline of what happens?

JH: Sure. Cats have three bones in their toes just like we have three bones in our fingers – two joints and three bones. The claw actually grows from the last bone. In people, our fingernails grow just from the flesh. But in cats, it grows from the bones. That bone has to be removed, amputated, bye-bye, in the garbage in order for the claw not to grow back. The surgery involves cutting between the second and third bones and amputating the bones and the claw. Also, this naturally severs everything in the way – nerves, tendons, and blood vessels. In a front-paw declaw, you're looking at 10 separate amputations. If the hind claws are done also, there are eight more. Fortunately, that's less common but considerably more painful.

There are three methods basically: (1) Resco, which uses dog nail trimmers, also called guillotine trimmers (2) scalpel, and (3) laser. Resco is by far the most common. In that procedure, the way we were taught in vet school, it was optional whether you leave the little piece of bone behind. The thing only cuts in a straight line. There is no straight line to the joint, so the bone has to be cut. There's a debate whether you should leave that piece in or take it out. If you leave it in, it can act like a pebble in the shoe, which is pretty darn uncomfortable.

KB: Geez.

JH: But if you take it out, then the tendons will contract even further and cause really severe malpositioning of the toes and change the weight bearing. Laser – a lot of vets advocate laser as less painful. There is not one shred of scientific evidence or whatsoever that it's less painful. It causes less bleeding. That's it.

KB: Right.

JH: It looks prettier at the end. But you are burning tissue and there are many, many complications from laser. There is no difference in pain ultimately. Any of those three methods – scalpel, laser, or Resco – will change the anatomy and change the physiology. It just changes everything about the way the cat walks. Sometimes vets bandage; some don't. Bandaging, they put tight bandages on to control bleeding. You can imagine those painful, painful paws swelling up inside of a rigid bandage.

KB: Oh, right.

JH: There have been many cases of loss of a limb because of bandages put on too tight or the tourniquet was misapplied. Declawing is so painful that it's the procedure of choice to test new pain medications. Everybody understands that it's more painful than spaying and neutering. I mean, cats do not walk on their uterus.

KB: Right.

JH: Because they do walk on their feet. Orthopedic procedures on people's hands and feet are acknowledged to be some of the most painful procedures you can do on people. I have a partial declaw on one of my toes four or five years ago. It still hurts, you know.

KB: Right.

JH: It's just... It's crazy.

KB: And on top of the mutilation that occurs with the toes is, of course, cats having to weight-bear, which just becomes a torturous situation for them. What's the deal with veterinarians who still perform this procedure with two to three days of pain meds and cats should be fine? I mean, it's appalling to think that cats are going to get over this excruciating pain in 48 hours. Where did this idea – that their pain is going to resolve and everything is going to be fine – ever come from?

[----- 10:00 -----]

JH: Cats. It came from cats themselves. The problem is that cats are extremely stoic. They do not show signs of pain. Yes, cats are predators, but they are also prey for bigger predators – a great horned owl, a fox, or a coyote. All of which we have right here in the middle of the city. Even in New York City and even in Los Angeles, all those predators are there. If a cat shows signs of pain, it's going to be somebody's lunch. They hide pain very, very well. They seem okay. But absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. Pain is definitely still present.

Even the pain management specialists, they recommend multimodal pain control before, during, and after surgery for a few days, even though there was a study done many years ago – probably I think seven years ago – that measured the weight that cats were putting on their feet. They only studied this for 12 days, and the cats were still [feeling] painful at the end of that based on how they were walking and shielding those toes from weight.

KB: Wow.

JH: We know that pain medication should be given for at least two weeks, and I don't know anyone who does that.

KB: Right. That's certainly not the standard of practice for our profession, which is horrific when you think about it.

JH: It's terrible.

KB: On top of the anatomical and the physiologic changes – of course, it's going to shift the weight-bearing. It's going to change how the toes physiologically function and how the wrist functions. Obviously that's going to impact the elbow-joint structure all the way up to the shoulder girdle, which is going to affect how the front limbs function, and then, of course, compensatory changes will change how the rear limbs function. If, God forbid, they have all four paws declawed, they literally don't have a comfortable leg to stand on, which is going to make a chronic pain scenario.

JH: Right.

KB: Talk to us a little bit about what some of the emotional or personality changes that can occur are. When procedures are done in cats, we're like, "Oh, I've just saved myself my sofa," "I'm going to prevent my kitty from doing any damage to my rental apartment," or "My veterinarian just said it was a good idea. If we're going to do it, we should do it as a kitten and not as an adult, so I'm just going to go ahead and schedule this." There are some significant and permanent behavioral side effects from this procedure. Can you talk a little bit about what some of those are?

JH: Well, let's talk a little bit about pain first.

KB: Yes.

JH: Because the behavior flows out of the pain. The veterinary organizations have been very careful about how they refer to behavior problems. They say there's no evidence of behavior problems when cats are compared to control groups. Well, none of the studies used a control group. Actually, statistically speaking, the control group is the cat's behavior before surgery versus the cat's behavior after surgery. In that case, when you look at that metric, about 33 percent of cats will develop a behavior problem – biting or urinating outside the box. Both of those are related to pain.

Now, you've changed how the cat walks. Normally, they carry 60 percent of their bodyweight on their front feet. You're right. The problems flow upstream – carpus (which is the wrist), elbow, shoulder, spine, back end, and all of those things. If you hurt your, you know... I'm really good at breaking ankles. I've done it four times.

KB: Oh, goodness.

JH: Yeah.

KB: Geez.

JH: Klutz is my middle name, let me tell you. I know that there's arthritis in those joints just from limping for several weeks.

KB: Sure.

JH: They have shown that the weight equalizes after about six months. But that's weight-bearing among the four legs. Within the paw that's declawed, the cats are still shifting their weight backwards. That really can lead to collapse of the wrist.

KB: Carpus, yeah.

JH: They end up walking on their ankles, wrist, and things, and it just changes everything. If you're leaving that little piece of bone in there and something regrows, which is entirely possible... It happens all the time. The thing of that is it can happen up to 15 years after the declaw.

KB: Wow.

JH: Fifteen years. Those little pieces were growing in there for how long? Years.

KB: Right.

JH: That was painful. If both of your feet are painful, you don't limp. You don't feel limp because you only limp if only one is painful. The way that the tendons contract when they're severed like that is it pulls the toes back, it changes the angles that the foot hits the ground, and it causes serious pain. It's just... I get so frustrated.

KB: Sure.

JH: How can vets not recognize this? Most vet students are coming right out of high school and a couple of years of college. They have been well-trained to listen to their superiors, listen to their teachers, and not question anything. And you know, they're told it's no problem, and they believe it.

KB: Right.

JH: Cats, they can feel pain and illness until it's overwhelming. With chronic pain like declawing, they deal with it. They may look normal. They may play. They may pretend to scratch. They may climb. They may jump. But it's not normal, what they're doing. Their whole physiology has changed. Their biomechanics have changed. Down the road, these can lead to problems.

Now, there are immediate behavior changes of biting and urination outside the box that are documented in a third of cats. But there are also the mental and emotional problems. Lots of owners have reported that their cats become morose, withdrawn, irritable, and aggressive. Boy, wouldn't you be cranky if every step you took hurt?

KB: Sure.

JH: I'd get pretty darn cranky.

KB: You bet.

JH: But they still... They try to act normal because that's their nature. One thing that's getting some attention now is called the Grimace Scale. [To] grimace is you wrinkle up your face like "Eew." There are subtle signs of pain that can be seen in declawed kitties if you're looking for them. The signs are the ears are pulled back a little; the whiskers are pulled back; the eyes may squint; the face kind of bunches up; wrinkly nose; and the cheeks may kind of puff out a little bit because they're like clenching their teeth. They're going, "Oh!"

KB: Yup, you bet.

JH: Just like you would do. There are photos online. They're very interesting; they've got scales for mice, rats, rabbits, and horses. Of course, not cats because people don't want to know.

KB: Yeah.

JH: When some animals are in pain, there's an incentive not to know about it.

KB: Don't you think that part of it... I guess when I got out of vet school, I knew at my practice I would never offer declawing, tail docking, ear cropping, or any of those procedures that would mutilate or maim animals in any way. But I've had people say, "If you're not going to do it, I'm going to go elsewhere because I just declaw my cats. I've done it for 50 years. All the other vets say it's fine. Why are you the first veterinarian and all of a sudden you're acting like a crazy animal rights person?" Why is the general public's viewpoint toward this procedure still that it's totally normal for cats to have this done?

Why are we in the minority as veterinarians to stand up and say everyone really needs to think twice about performing this behavior? It's unnatural, it's unkind, and there's a chronic lifetime of discomfort that happens afterwards. Why does it feel like we're in the minority of veterinarians who should be talking about this but no one really is? Do you feel like the word is getting out? Do you feel like there's an evolution of new veterinarians willing to begin evaluating different options? What's the issue between old-time vets saying this is not a big deal and we're overreacting, and you and I saying we need to talk about this more because this is not a "routine procedure"?

JH: Right. Well, you'd be surprised. Some of the vets that are seeing the light as it were are older vets, yet a lot of the students coming out of vet schools, they are still believing their professors that this isn't a problem. If you look on the American Veterinary Medical Association website, they have all kinds of stuff about declawing. Their view is that if you do the surgery correctly and that if you use adequate pain management, it's no big deal. It's fine. Go right ahead. Now, we've already discussed that most vets don't do it right and most vets don't give proper pain medication.

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KB: Right.

JH: Which means that most vets should not be doing this. But it's a matter of education. It's a matter of kind of beating people over the head a little bit in a nice way.

KB: Sure.

JH: Just to educate them as to what are the realities of this procedure. I was very involved in getting the anti-declawing laws passed in California. Eight cities in California banned declawing within their city limits.

KB: It's awesome.

JH: Including San Francisco, Berkeley, Los Angeles, and Santa Monica – big cities. We figured we saved about four million cats.

KB: That's wonderful. That was just through a process of educating people. You were passionate and made sure that people got it, the point that you were trying to make, which is wonderful.

JH: Right. The interesting thing is that once they – these city councils and supervisors – got what the procedure was, it was a no brainer. They said, "Oh, my God. That's cruel." I'm like, "Yeah!"

KB: Right exactly.

JH: We had a lot of opposition from the California Veterinary Medicine Association and local veterinarians. Some would get quite irate about it. Why is that? Because we're threatening them. Why are we threatening them? Because they make money off of this procedure and because they are terrified that

if somebody can restrict how they can practice medicine, that's just a slippery slope and pretty soon people will...

KB: Sure.

JH: Have a movement and say you can't give antibiotics because of resistance. You can't give this. You can't do that. They don't want their rights to practice how they want to to be abridged in any way. That is why we're still not doing it in California because the vet med association got a law passed that says you cannot pass any laws in your town that prohibit vets from doing whatever they darn well please.

KB: Wow.

JH: Yeah. But it was so clear when people understood what it was.

KB: Sure.

JH: [They're like,] "Duh? Yeah, it's cruel." And there are so many alternatives.

KB: Let's talk about it. Because I think one of the big misconceptions that young veterinarians are still hearing and believing is exactly what your former boss said, which is, "No, declawing little kitties is going to make them more adoptable." The humane society I grew up in offered it as kind of a bonus procedure. You're getting kind of a free procedure that ultimately would make these cats more placeable into homes. It's just lack of education.

JH: Sure. It is.

KB: What are some great alternative that you offer to people who say, "Okay, you're telling me that if I don't do this procedure, I'm going to have a happier and healthier kitty (which they will), but what that means is it is quite a bit more work?" Obviously when you lock off toes and when kitties have no digits to be able to have claws, there are no issues pertaining to claws. When kitties have claws, you do have to do a little bit retraining. It's going to make you think. You're going to have to do some planning. There's going to have to be some creativity involved with helping cats manage their claws. But you and I lived our whole lives with toenails and we managed them fine.

JH: Yeah.

KB: Let's talk about living with toenails as a healthier, safer, and happier alternative. What are some suggestions you can give people who say, "My cat is destroying my house. I'm this close to dumping him at a pound. Help me."

JH: There are at least a dozen alternatives. They're listed on my website, of course. The number one thing is provide an alternative. If you don't have a scratching post of some kind for your cat... This is a hardwired instinct – they must scratch. Even when they're declawed and even when they're painful, they still make those motions. It is such a deep instinct. There was a survey done in 2012, which is not very long ago, that found that 48 percent of cat guardians did not know they were supposed to have a scratching post.

KB: Wow.

JH: Yeah. Two things about that: people are not paying attention, but veterinarians are doing a crappy job of educating their clients.

KB: Terrible.

JH: What is the problem? You don't talk about scratching when people bring in a new kitten.

KB: Right.

JH: That's a serious failure on behalf of the profession.

KB: Yup.

JH: Get a scratching post. Now, when you get a cat or a cat enters your life – whether it's big, little, old, or young – check out and watch where the cat scratches. Do they like the carpet? Get them a horizontal cardboard scratch that sits on the floor. They're going after the couch? Get them a tall sturdy scratching tree. Especially the ones that are wound around with sisal rope, I love those and cats adore them. You can even replace the rope when it gets too ratty, although they really kind of like it better when it's ratty.

KB: Yup.

JH: But there are also nail caps called Soft Paws. You can have your vet or groomer show you how to do that. You put these soft final nail caps on the nail, and they cannot scratch you. Now, let's look at this logically for just one second. You know what? Dogs have paws, too.

KB: Right.

JH: Dogs can scratch you. They can destroy furniture just from jumping up and down. We don't declaw dogs. Now, why is that? A classmate of mine actually asked that question. They said, "Oh, because dogs scream bloody murder if you declaw them."

KB: Isn't that shocking?

JH: And cats don't.

KB: Right.

JH: We don't get them. But how are we managing dog paws?

KB: My gosh.

JH: Oh, my goodness. And how is every other civilized nation on the planet except the US and Canada? They don't declaw in the entire European Union (EU). It is illegal to declaw.

KB: Right.

JH: All of those people, they have babies. They have old people. They have people on blood thinners. They have people who are immunocompromised, who are taking steroids, who have had transplants, or who have immune-related disease. They have all those things, and yet those cats are doing just fine with their claws in those situations.

KB: Yup.

JH: There is no reason for declawing. All reasons for non-medical declawing have non-surgical alternatives. Now, these alternatives, there's a long list of them. Some people have had good luck with the rotary nail trimmers like Dremel. I think they call them pedicures or something. Also you can put barriers up – an upside down carpet runner in front of the corner of the couch where they like to go. That's maybe a little inconvenient. You can put tin foil on it. You can throw a loose blanket or towel over the furniture.

Because what cats like to do is they like to hook into the fabric and pull, so they get that wonderful backstretch. If they hook onto something and it comes off or falls on their head, that's a disaster.

KB: That's no fun. Exactly. No fun. No stretch with that, right?

JH: Right. You can use double-sided sticky tapes. They make something called Sticky Paws that won't damage your furniture. Now, here's the thing: you don't have to live with these forever. Yeah, it may look a little weird to put stuff on your sofa for a couple of weeks that it's going to take you to train your cat to the scratching post, but cats can be trained.

KB: Right.

JH: They really, really can. They're a little harder than dogs because you have to find the real jackpot treat that they are going to work for.

KB: Sure.

JH: But it's not that hard. It's easy with a kitten. You can teach a kitten to let you cut their toenails.

KB: Right.

JH: Or you can have the groomer or the vet do it. It's usually fairly inexpensive. Maybe your next-door neighbor is a vet tech, and he'll come over and do it for you.

KB: Right.

JH: It's just a matter of paying attention. You know, dull claws and cut claws are less [inaudible 28:50] things and they're not going to hurt you if they scratch.

KB: That to me, seems just, I mean, almost logical. When we get a puppy ad kitten as veterinarians, our job is to teach basic grooming because it's something that owners need to be able to do confidently, they need to be able to do it in a way that's not harmful, and they need to be able to do it in a way that's going to be not stressful to their kitties. We call it "a nail a day" at my practice. We just do one nail.

JH: Exactly.

KB: By the time, the kitty realizes what's going on, they're done. If you start that at eight weeks of age... All three of my cats will lay on their backs. We can do all their paws now. But they've just been trained and conditioned that it doesn't hurt. It's no big deal. We do it every week. We keep those nails really, really short, so that we don't have any of these issues. That just seems logical to me, and yet that's just something that our profession doesn't preach as any type of proactive [approach] – nail trims – to prevent animals from starting to cause any type of problems around the house.

That's something that, like you said, we have a professional failure in educating our clients on some really basic common-sense alternative like trim your nails, just like you have to trim your nails to be able to be healthful, keep them in check and in line. It's just natural for you to perform these basic maintenance procedures to be able to reduce the likelihood that your cat is going to have any type of damage around the home.

[----- 30:00 -----]

Here's my question to you, when you have clients who are entertaining the thought of declawing, do you have people that are able to be wisely convinced that this is unhealthy and that they need to not do it? Or do you have people who, after you explained this to them, they're just going to take their veterinarian's

advice and declaw anyway? How often do you have clients calling you up saying, “Oh, my gosh, I just made the biggest mistake of my life?”

JH: Well, that’s a good question. In my experience, when I explain the procedure and tell them what it is, I don’t even have to go in to the side effects that may occur afterwards. When they understand what it is, they say, “Oh no.” And 75 percent of clients will say, “Thank you so much for telling me that. I didn’t know. No, let’s cancel that surgery.”

KB: Good.

JH: About 25 percent will say, “We don’t care. We don’t care if they’re in pain for the rest of their lives. Declaw them.” In the practice that I was in, I had to do that. Fortunately, I was only there for five years, and I never declawed another cat.

KB: Sure.

JH: It’s just most people are willing to listen, especially when you mention that if a third of cats have a problem with this, have developed a behavior problem, you now. If they were nippy to start with, they bite harder and more often. I was bitten by a cat, and I spent five days in the hospital.

KB: You bet.

JH: I had serious surgery on my hand and was on antibiotics for weeks. Would you prefer a scratched-up couch or would you prefer a 10-thousand-dollar hospital bill?

KB: Sure.

JH: Would you prefer a scratched-up chair to urine-soaked dry wall, carpet, furniture, beddings, and subfloors? Even landlords are starting to get the point that a declawed cat is fully capable of causing far, far, far more damage than non-declawed cats. In fact, California has now passed a law prohibiting landlords from requiring declawing as a condition of rental.

KB: That’s awesome.

JH: We need to do that everywhere because it’s certainly not the case here in Denver. Lots of places still do that. You know, I turned down a beautiful apartment that was perfect, but they wanted me to declaw my 15- and 18-year-old cats. I said, “I don’t think so.”

KB: Right. Well, I tell you, what I’m hoping, Dr. Jean, is that when people have cats that are starting to exhibit some destructive behaviors that owners can recognize that it’s our job to do our part to provide to them multiple scratching posts with different surfaces for them to be able to exhibit this natural tendency of needing to stretch every digit, every claw, and every toe. We can do that in a way that can coexist with their toenails in a beautiful fashion, where they’re not being destructive and yet they’re capable of maintaining healthy claws without performing a maiming or mutilation behavior.

I really am hoping that people visit your website and that people are going to think twice before they listen to their veterinarian assuming that when a spay or neuter occurs, we should automatically throw in that declaw as something that would be able to help reduce potential destructive behaviors, when really what you are is (I don’t say guaranteed) inducing a different more destructive behavior. But we do know that by performing this procedure, your cat’s going to have some permanent personality, emotional, and physiological changes that there is no turning back from.

I think the more we talk about it, the more we can get the word out, which people need to hear in terms of not only great alternatives but the fact that this is a procedure that’s pretty archaic. I think you and I can

agree that it should just not be performed. There's just not a reason. Can you think of any reason other than obviously if there's a medical reason – if there's tumor on the toe or if the toe has to be amputated for a medical reason? Do you ever advocate declawing other than for medical reasons?

JH: No, because it's not a medical treatment; it's an irreversible surgical solution to a behavior problem. Vets are not real good at dealing with behavioral problems; they do know how to do surgeries. To a man with a hammer, everything looks like a nail.

KB: Yup.

JH: They only know one thing to do. Beyond all what we've talked about is the issue of phantom pain, which is totally not recognized in veterinary medicine.

KB: Right.

JH: It's a guarantee that these animals will be experiencing phantom pain at least intermittently and probably much more frequently than that, if not constantly. If we're going to do a procedure that's going to cause this animal pain for the rest of his life, you must try the other alternatives. If those don't work, you need to re-home the cat because you should not have one.

KB: At all. That's the point. I appreciate you taking time to talk with us today again. It's always wonderful to have you as a guest expert at our site. I appreciate you taking the time to explain in detail what happens with declaws. We're hoping that the more people you educate, the more people that will make wiser choices for the kitties that they're caring for. Thank you, Dr. Jean, for joining me.

JH: You're so welcome.

[END]