



## Nova Scotia Veterinary Medical Association

### Cosmetic Surgery Questions and Answers

**1Q: Why has the NSVMA made it unprofessional conduct for vets to do cosmetic surgery?**

1A: Cosmetic surgery is considered unnecessary. It provides no medical or health benefits for the animal. Cosmetic procedures may result in infection, chronic pain (tails) and affect behaviour (puppies with ear cropping.) Cosmetic surgery procedures are normally performed to meet breed standards or because of tradition. The origins for most of these traditions are either unclear, or unknown. The breed standards that dictate the necessity of many of these procedures are Canadian and American standards. These standards have been changed in many other countries where cosmetic surgery is not allowed.

**2Q: What happens if a breeder decides to do a tail docking procedure on a litter of puppies by him/herself?**

2A: This addition to the Code of Ethics applies to veterinarians in Nova Scotia only. Our legislation does not prevent a breeder from doing a tail dock procedure on his/her own litter of pups.

However, the recently proclaimed Animal Protection Act will apply to non-veterinarians. If animal cruelty is suspected and reported to the SPCA or the NSDA, it will be investigated and dealt with based on the facts and circumstances of the case.

**3Q: What if a person decides to ear crop his/her own dog?**

3A: Ear cropping requires general anesthesia, sterile surgical technique and pain control. Therefore, a veterinarian must perform ear cropping surgery. The CKC regulations state that any person who performs an ear cropping procedure without the use of a general anesthetic will be barred for life from all CKC events. In most jurisdictions, ear cropping without appropriate anesthesia and pain control would be considered an act of cruelty and would be pursued by the SPCA. The recently proclaimed Animal Protection Act will apply.

**4Q: Does this prevent people from showing their dogs in Nova Scotia with cropped ears, and docked tails?**

4A: No, the CKC sanctions many of the performance and conformation shows in Canada. Until the CKC breed standards change and the breed associations no longer require these surgical alterations, dogs will be shown altered.

**5Q: Why is there a 6 month grace period before this addition to the Code of Ethics is enforced?**

5A: This was done to allow veterinarians to inform breeders of the change and to allow time to educate the public and breeders about the reasons for the change. It also allows time for breeders and the public to lobby breed associations and the CKC to change the breed standards to reflect modern values regarding animal welfare.

**6Q: Can breeders take their dogs out of the province to have these procedures performed?**

6A: Yes. However, many veterinarians across the country already decline to do cosmetic surgery. Many provincial Veterinary Medical Associations, (e.g. NB, PEI, NL,) have enacted similar cosmetic surgery amendments and over the past ten years, the CVMA has promoted that cosmetic surgery should not take place.

**7Q: What else can be done?**

7A: Through this addition to the Code of Ethics, veterinarians in Nova Scotia have expressed their position that cosmetic surgery should not take place. Although the perspective exists with other groups that changes are required, the Breeders and Kennel Clubs have been slow to adapt breed standards. Attention should now be directed to these groups to assist them in the re-development of their standards.

**8: Other Information:**

Canadian Veterinary Medical Association

[www.canadianveterinarians.org](http://www.canadianveterinarians.org)