

Nail clipping in dogs under veterinary primary care



Nail clipping aims to maintain healthy nail length and function in dogs. However, there has been surprisingly **little published research** on the procedure.

This study aimed to report the **frequency of nail clipping** and any **associated risk factors** in dogs under primary veterinary care in the UK during 2019. Additionally, it focused on the **clinical management of nail clipping procedures** in these dogs.

The study included **2,250,741 dogs** under UK veterinary care in 2019

A random sample of **2,440 nail clipping cases** were analysed

The median age for nail-clipping cases was **5.07 years**

Results

Nail clipping is a common veterinary procedure, performed in 5.64% of all UK dogs under primary care each year.

Dogs aged **1–2 years** were most likely to receive **nail clipping**. Dogs **weighing less than 10.0 kg** had **higher odds of overgrown nails** compared to dogs weighing 40.0 kg or more

Nail clipping was the **primary reason for veterinary visits** in **59.4%** of events. The most common clinical justifications were **overgrown or ingrown nails** (12.66%) and **broken claws or dewclaws** (8.84%).

Purebred dogs had **lower odds** of nail clipping compared to **crossbreed dogs** (OR 0.94). Dogs in the Kennel Club **Hound and Toy breed groups** had **higher odds** of nail clipping compared to the dogs that were **non-Kennel Club recognised breeds**.

Breed risk for nail clipping*

*compared to crossbred dogs

Chihuahua (2.21 times risk)



Beagle (2.09 times risk)



Greyhound (2.02 times risk)



Reference breed: crossbreed



Pug (1.84 times risk)



Whippet (1.80 times risk)



Conclusions

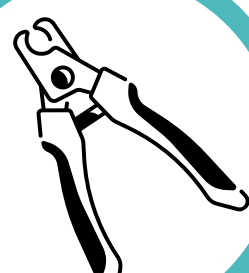
Nail-care in dogs is more than just a grooming exercise – it is also a major welfare issue.



- Small/toy and hound breeds are predisposed, suggesting conformational factors play a key role in nail health.
- Dewclaw issues accounted for over 10% of nail-related problems, suggesting this area needs more attention.

The current study advises:

1. Improved veterinary training on nail care
2. Nail clipping for dogs already under anaesthesia
3. Promoting nurse-led clinics, client education and preventive nail care protocols



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