

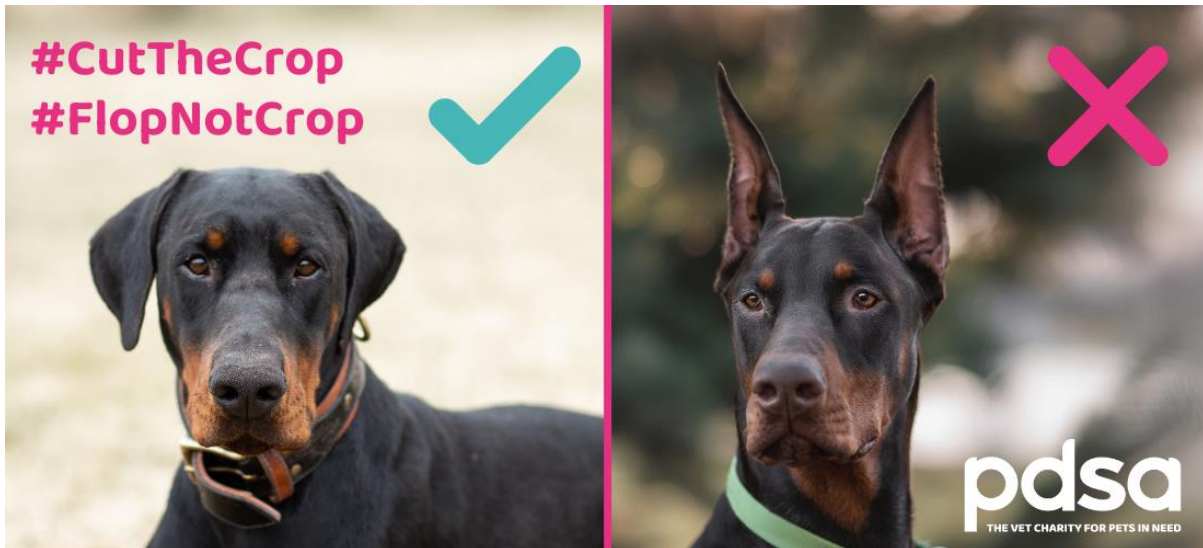


Ear Cropping in Dogs

Overview

- Ear cropping is a cruel and unnecessary mutilation that involves removing a dog's earflaps to change how they look.
- Ear cropping has no health benefits, is extremely painful, affects a dog's ability to communicate and can cause emotional trauma.
- Despite being illegal in the UK, there has been a significant rise in the number of ear cropped dogs recently, who are either being illegally cropped within the UK, or imported from countries where it's still legal.
- This awful trend is being made worse by the rise in celebrities and 'online influencers' showcasing ear cropped dogs as 'protection pets'.
- PDSA are calling for the Government to make it illegal to import dogs with cropped ears, which will also stop people illegally cropping in the UK and falsely claiming the dog was imported.

What is ear cropping?



Ear cropping is a procedure that involves cutting a dog's ear flaps off to change how they look – it's a painful mutilation that has absolutely no benefit to the dog.



Is ear cropping illegal in the UK?

Yes, ear cropping is illegal in the UK and many other European countries, but sadly it remains legal in some countries, such as the USA.

It's illegal to take your dog out of the UK to have their ears cropped, but unfortunately it's still technically legal to import an ear cropped dog from a country where it's allowed. This means that people in the UK are still supporting this cruel trade by importing a cropped dog from a country where it's still allowed, or by illegally purchasing an ear cropped dog from someone in the UK and pretending they were imported.

PDSA are calling for the Government to make it illegal to import dogs with cropped ears – which would also make it impossible to cover up illegal cropping in this country.

Why do people crop dogs' ears?

The ear cropping 'trend' started in dog fighting circles, supposedly to stop the dogs from using their ears to show submission and to prevent the opponent dog from grabbing them. Despite being illegal, dog fighting unfortunately still happens and as a result dogs are still subject to this horrific procedure. It also happens because:

- Some people feel that it makes dogs look tougher and more intimidating.
- In countries such as the USA, ear cropping has become the 'norm' for certain breeds, and is sometimes even listed as part of their breed standard!
- People pay a lot of money for dogs with cropped ears, so unfortunately there is profit to be made in this cruel trade.
- There is a growing trend of celebrities and influencers buying ear cropped dogs as trained 'protection pets'. Unfortunately, this is starting to 'normalise', and even 'glamorise', ear cropping in the UK – an extremely worrying trend for animal welfare.



Why is ear cropping bad?



Ear cropping is a huge welfare issue because:

- **It's painful** – ear flaps are a sensitive part of the body so cropping them is extremely painful. If it's done illegally by an untrained person, they are very unlikely to have access to proper equipment, anaesthetic, or pain relief. After surgery, the remaining part of the ear might also be splinted, forcing it to heal in an upright position. The ears may need to be held in this painful, unnatural position for 2-4 months.
- **It has no health benefits** – despite some people claiming that ear cropping has benefits such as preventing ear infections, this is simply untrue. Ears are only ever cropped because people want their dogs to look a certain way – there are absolutely no health benefits to the procedure.
- **It causes emotional trauma** – ear cropping is usually carried out on young puppies, meaning that they are put through a lot of pain and suffering when they are only two to three months old. They are also likely to suffer from lack of socialisation with other dogs while their ears



heal, which can take up to 3 months. Ear cropping is likely to leave a dog with mental scars as well as physical ones.

- **It limits how a dog communicates** – dogs use their ears to tell others how they are feeling, so without them they can struggle to communicate, which can potentially lead to aggression.
- **It affects hearing** – dogs move their ears in the direction of noise to help them interpret sounds. It's difficult to know how much mutilating the ears in this way affects a dog's hearing, but experts agree that some damage is possible.

Is ear cropping ever medically necessary?

Very occasionally, it's necessary to remove part of an ear for a medical reason, for example, to remove a tumour or fix a non-healing wound. In the UK this procedure, called a pinnectomy, can only be carried out by a registered vet or vet nurse. A pinnectomy tends to look very different to ear cropping and is usually only necessary for one ear.

Is it legal to rescue a dog with cropped ears?

Sadly, at the moment there are lots of ear cropped dogs in rehoming centres because of the rising trend. It's completely legal to adopt one of these dogs, but always make sure you use a reputable rehoming centre and never buy a cropped puppy/dog from a private seller.

Should I report ear cropping?

Yes, if you believe someone has an illegally ear cropped dog, report it:

- **England and Wales** – call the RSPCA on 0300 1234 999
- **Scotland** – call the SSPCA on 0300 0999 999
- **Northern Ireland** – contact your [local council Animal Welfare Officer](#)

Other ways to help:

- Call out anyone who posts pictures of dogs with cropped ears on social media by using #CutTheCrop or #FlopNotCrop.
- Write to retailers selling ear cropping kits and/or ear splinting kits using [this template letter produced by the BVA.](#)



- Checkout the [British Veterinary Association's \(BVA\) page on ear cropping.](#)
- Share this page on your social media.

Published: March 2022