

QUESTION: SHOULD I LET MY CAT OUT?

ANSWER: NO--AND HERE'S WHY

Many cat lovers are now savvy that indoor cats are safe cats, while others still think cats deserve freedom to run in the great outdoors. When humans domesticated cats, we took on the responsibility for their health and welfare. Part of that responsibility is to keep cats safe and in good health. For those holdouts for letting cats roam free, consider these top reasons to keep cats indoors.

To Monitor Your Cat's Urinary Tract & Bowel Health

Without being able to monitor what your cat does in the litter box, you wouldn't notice undiscovered urinary or bowel blockages. He could be having painful attempts at urination (a potentially serious and possibly fatal problem!) or blood and/or mucous in his feces—a red flag for constipation, bowel blockage or mega-colon. Knowing about these issues EARLY will help you to treat them and have your cat healthy and happy for a long, long time.

An Indoor Cat Is Relatively Safe From Communicable Disease

Cats allowed free access to the outdoors invariably come into contact with other cats. Even casual contact can transmit parasites such as fleas or ringworm, or more serious communicable diseases such as FeLV (Feline Leukemia), FIP (Feline Infectious Peritonitis and always fatal) and Panleukopenia (Feline Distemper), one of the most serious of communicable diseases. Aggressive contact (fighting) with other cats can also pass on FIV (Feline Immunodeficiency Virus). These infectious diseases are serious and some have no treatment or cure! Even some URIs (kitty colds) can lead to long-term problems.

Indoor Cats Do Not Get Hit By Cars

According to one source, more cats are killed by cars annually than are euthanized in U.S. animal shelters. Even the most careful driver cannot avoid hitting a cat that runs across the street in front of a car (chasing a bird or a rabbit—and oblivious to traffic). Even so-called "country" areas are no guarantee for cats. All it takes is one misjudgment of distance or speed.

Indoor Cats Are Safe from Predators And Dog Packs

Outdoor cats are below predators in the food chain, and they are sitting ducks for owls, raptors, and coyotes. Dogs running in packs will consider a cat fair game; even one large dog can easily overpower and kill a cat. Remember that some dogs are also bred to attack; they are not really to blame when their instinct takes over. Even with a full set of fangs and claws, the cat rarely has a chance when caught outside, and declawed cats are even more at risk.

Indoor Cats Don't Create Neighbor Problems

Even "well-bred" cats will venture into neighbors' yards when allowed to roam free, and the resultant neighborhood discord has in many cases caused problems. People who don't like cats will not tolerate cats using their gardens as litter boxes, and will sometimes resort to extreme measures to keep the cats out. At the very least, a neighbor might call the local Animal Control to pick up the "stray" cat.

Indoor Cats Rarely Get Abscesses From Fighting

Cats are very territorial and will defend their territory to the death if challenged by another cat. At the very least, these territorial battles can often result in abscessed wounds, which can be deadly if not treated in time. There's also the chance, of course, of contracting FIV from deep bite wounds and an FIV infection could greatly shorten your cat's life.

Indoor Cats Are Safe From Human Abuse

Freely-roaming cats are easy targets for gangs of young people with time on their hands, for cat-haters who seek cats out for target practice, and for neighbors who would think nothing of killing a cat for trespassing on their property. Although animal protection laws are beefing up, prosecution will never bring a loved cat back to life. It's a well-known fact that serial killers often practice first on animals.

Indoor Cats Can Get Plenty of Exercise

Cats do get exercise indoors with interactive toys, climbing towers, scratching posts, and other indoor toys—all much safer than running from dogs or fighting with other cats. Playing with your cat is the perfect time to bond with it—and get some exercise yourself!

Indoor Cats Are Not A Danger to Wildlife

Let's face it: people (especially cat-haters) consider cats to be predators. Left to their own devices, cats will probably chase and kills birds, rabbits and other small wildlife. Most of us would rather not see our cats in a killer role, and keeping them indoors will protect wildlife to some degree.

Indoor Cats Don't Get Lost

As outdoor cats widen their outdoor territories, they may become lost long enough to be "rescued" by other cat lovers, legitimate rescue groups, or picked up by Animal Control as strays. Statistics show that of "owned" cats turned into shelters, only **3%** are eventually reunited with their owners!! Collars can break, and even microchips do not guarantee a cat will not be adopted and kept as an indoor cat by someone else. Why take the chance?

Indoor Cats Are Not Stolen

"Bunchers" are people who sell cats to laboratories for animal experimentation or research. Their prime source of cats is on the street. Even a cat sitting on his front lawn is fair game for a buncher. Other people pick up cats to use as "bait" for training fighting dogs. Both categories of cat-knappers are the lowest of the low, but they ARE out there. So remember: an indoor cat is always safer.