



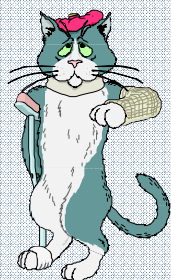
Mountainview Animal Hospital

WINTER NEWSLETTER



The bottom line

Outdoor cats are four times more likely to be killed within their first year of life than indoor cats.



More communities are passing by-laws against roaming cats. Letting your cat outdoors may become illegal in the future.

The best solution is to keep your cat indoors where he or she is safe, but to provide extra attention and stimulation to ensure that the natural play and hunting instincts are satisfied.

SHOULD MY CAT BE ALLOWED TO GO OUTSIDE?

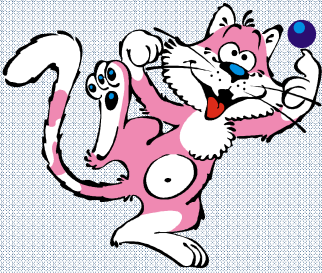
This is a very controversial question; even experts disagree as to whether or not cats should remain strictly indoors or be allowed to roam free. While there is no disputing that indoor cats live longer lives, averaging 12 to 15 years versus the 2 to 4 years of outdoor cats, some would argue that the quality of that longer life is less. Cats that are allowed to roam free may in fact have more fun; chasing bugs, birds and mice, and exploring the world is certainly stimulating and more natural, but is it worth the risk? Responsible pet ownership requires you to answer this question for your feline friend.

Aside from the obvious improvement in your cat's life span, there are many good reasons to keep your cat indoors.

- Outdoor cats are four times more likely to be killed within their first year of life.
- Outdoor cats often go missing, they either become lost or stolen.
- You will not have to clean up half eaten birds and mice if your cat remains indoors.
- Your neighbours will like you more. People who do not own cats do not appreciate outdoor cats hunting the birds at their feeders or pooping in their garden.
- Outdoor cats are sometimes poisoned, either by angry neighbours or accidentally by getting into peoples garages and lawn care products.
- Outdoor cats are often wounded or killed by dogs and coyotes.
- Cats are much less likely to be hit by a car crossing your living room than crossing the street.
- Outdoor cats can be exposed to the deadly Feline Leukemia Virus and Feline Infectious Peritonitis Virus.
- Outdoor cats can get fleas, ear and skin mites and intestinal worms. Some of these parasites can also pose a health risk to your family.
- Outdoor cats are often involved in fights with other outdoor cats. The results of these fights can be serious bite wound abscesses and viral infections.
- More communities are passing by-laws against roaming cats. Letting your cat outdoors may become illegal.

The bottom line

Indoor cats often become obese from the lack of activity. Encouraging your cat to play fetch by throwing a scrunched up piece of paper, wiggling around ribbon or feathers, or the light from a flashlight stimulates some of your cat's hunting instincts and involves you in the playtime as well.



Harness training your cat is becoming a popular way to give indoor cats some fresh air.

Never leave a harnessed or leashed cat unsupervised.

They are at risk of becoming tangled or choked by the leash or wounded by other animals.

Despite all the risks that outdoor cats face, there are still some cat enthusiasts that strongly feel that cats are happier when allowed the freedom to roam outside. While it is true that outdoor cats face many risks to their health and safety, having the freedom to roam, hunt and explore does reduce some of the behavioural stresses that we occasionally see in indoor cats. Scratching the furniture, inappropriate urination and urine marking, boredom and obesity are real concerns for indoor cats and their families. To make matters worse, obesity predisposes cats to diabetes, liver disease and degenerative joint disease.

So what is the right answer? Well, the best solution is to keep your cat indoors where he or she is safe, but to provide extra attention and stimulation to ensure that the natural play and hunting instincts are satisfied. While kittens are constantly getting into things and seem quite capable of entertaining themselves, adult cats may need a little extra help to prevent boredom.

Try providing scratching and climbing posts; this will not only avoid the destruction of your furniture, it will increase the relative space your cat has. Climbing posts or cat trees will also satisfy your cats desire to climb and rest in high places. Adding a variety of toys is also important; there is a large selection of cat toys in the pet stores. Changing them up from time to time will keep your cat's interest. Sometimes the most entertaining toys are those that are made at home. Encouraging your cat to play fetch by throwing a scrunched up piece of paper, wiggling around ribbon or feathers or the light from a flashlight stimulates some of your cat's hunting instincts and involves you in the playtime as well. You can also use mealtimes to challenge your cat. Spreading kibbles around the house so your cat has to 'hunt' for the meal can be a fun way to give your cat more exercise.

Want more ideas? Visit <http://www.vet.ohio-state.edu/indoorcat.htm>. The Ohio State University's Veterinary College has designed the "Indoor Cat Initiative" for the purposes of enriching the lives of indoor cats. It is an interesting site; check it out.

Don't forget about the litter box. Nothing stresses an indoor cat more than poor litter box hygiene. For tips on how to keep your cat's litter box up to feline standards refer to the article 'The Rules According To Cats On Litter Box Hygiene' from our newsletter Volume 14, Summer 2007. You can find it on our website <http://www.mountainviewanimalhospital.ca/newsletters/summer-2007>

If letting your cat have some outdoor time is very important to you, training your cat to accept a harness and leash, or building an outdoor pen is a reasonable compromise to letting your cat have free roam of the neighbourhood.

HOW TO HARNESS TRAIN A CAT

Harness training your cat is much easier than most people think and is becoming a popular way to give cats some fresh air. The OSPCA has printed instructions on how to harness train your cat, the following has been reproduced from that article.

1. Be very patient and persistent and reward your pet lovingly. Yelling, hitting or rough treatment will only teach your cat to fear you and will accomplish nothing.
2. If possible start training early. When the time comes, usually at 6 months of age, have your cat spayed or neutered, this will decrease the desire to roam.

The bottom line

Many people who live in apartments let their cats out on the balcony for some fresh air. While this seems like a nice idea, it is very risky. It is not uncommon for cats to be rushed to the veterinary hospital for injuries sustained after the cat fell off the balcony. Cats should only be allowed on the balcony if they are supervised.

Consider having your cat microchipped if he or she is to be going outside. Proper identification will allow your cat to be returned home safely if he or she is ever lost. Even cats that are going outside on a harness should be microchipped, just in case he or she slips out of the harness and the security of your backyard.

We searched our file to see what interesting names some of you came up with.

Ding - a - ling
Ask it
Naughty Boy
Doctor Wasabi
Dot Com
Farmer
Flea Bag
Hakuna Matata
Divet

3. Purchase a lightweight "H" shaped nylon harness that buckles at the neck and stomach. It should also have a metal ring on the back portion to hold a proper identification tag and to attach to a lightweight leash. To find the correct size, measure your cat's neck and stomach snugly, but not tightly; you should be able to place two fingers between the collar and your cat's neck when it is fastened. Purchase an identification tag at the same time and have it engraved with your daytime and nighttime phone numbers, including area code.
4. Place the harness, identification tag and leash where your cat can sniff, paw and play with them.
5. After several days, gently but firmly put the harness on your cat. Allow two fingers width at the neck and stomach. Do not attach the leash yet. The best results usually come when this is attempted just before feeding so your cat is distracted. At this point, your cat may exhibit abnormal behaviour such as running around the room or lying down and acting as though he or she can no longer stand up. As long as your cat is safe, leave the harness on for five minutes. Repeat this several times a day for a week to ten days. Praise your cat for calm, comfortable behaviour.
6. Once your cat is comfortable with the harness, attach the identification tag and leash. Let your cat drag the leash around the house for several minutes at a time, several times a day for another few days. Be sure to supervise your cat to avoid him or her becoming tangled and frightened.
7. Once your cat has accepted this part, pick up the leash and just hold onto it. Your cat must now realize he or she has some restraints placed upon him. While gently pulling on the leash, offer food and ask your cat to 'come'. Once again be patient, persistent and loving.
8. Remember, cats will not walk on a leash like a dog. Cats usually like to run a bit, stop, roll, sniff an area, eat grass and then carry on.
9. Never leave a harnessed or leashed cat unsupervised. Once your cat is tied up, he or she is totally defenseless and could fall prey to other roaming animals or become tangled, frightened or injured.

You may find that strolling around the yard, chasing butterflies with your harnessed feline friend fun and relaxing for you too.

WEIRD PET NAMES

Employees of Veterinary Pet Insurance scanned the names of the company's nearly half-million insured pets and then voted on the 10 most unusual names for dogs and cats. Here's what they came up with:

Dog:

Doogie Schnauzer, M.D.
Sergeant Sausage
I Am Spartacus
Lunchbox
Angus Sir Loin
Bam-Bam Noodle Butt
Mouse Meat
Fluffernutter
Kanye East
Inspector Foo Foo

Cat:

Snag L. Tooth
Clawed Monet
Velvet Elvis
Eartha Kitty
Blue Man Chew
Catzilla
Thurston Picklesworth III
Yardsale
Dishwater
Polly Prissy pants

The bottom line

North Americans are not the only ones to spoil their pets. According to a 1995 survey, 7 out of 10 British dogs get Christmas gifts from their doting owners.



CONGRATULATIONS TO SABRINA AND HER HUSBAND

Sabrina, our Registered Veterinary Technician, has been with us for many years but has been dearly missed lately. Her absences have been for a good cause though, she has been on pregnancy/maternity leave. Sabrina and her husband have recently become the proud parents of two boys and a girl. That's right - triplets! We wish Sabrina and her family happy days, restful nights and a lifetime of dreams come true.

LIFE ACCORDING TO NIKE

Nike has found a new spot to lie; the warm towels and blankets straight out of the dryer. Understandable, it is fresh, clean, soft and warm. The heat from the warm towels may even make her arthritic joints feel a little better. It's quite cute to see her all curled up and cozy. And, what harm could it do to let her enjoy a little warm towel time; right? Well, apparently cuddling up in warm towels can be hazardous to your health. Last week Nike was almost thrown down into a hamper from the counter because she had snuggled into the towels so deeply that no one knew she was there. It was only when the warm pile of towels growled that we realized Nike was in there. Fortunately, the startled employee stopped her actions in time to avoid injuring Nike. Now, we all poke the laundry before moving it.



HOLIDAY HOURS



Dec. 24 th - Christmas Eve:	Open 9:00 - 12:00
Dec. 25 th - Christmas Day:	Closed
Dec. 26 th - Boxing Day:	Closed
Dec. 27 th - Sunday	Closed
Dec. 31 st - New Years Eve:	Open 9:00 - 12:00
Jan 1 st - New Years Day:	Closed
Jan 2 nd - Saturday hours	Open 9:00 - 12:00
Jan 3 rd - Sunday	Closed

Unless otherwise specified here, Mountainview Animal Hospital will be open during its regular office hours. Animals in the hospital over the holidays will receive the same great care and attention as always. For those patients requiring emergency care over Christmas and New Years, The Emergency Veterinary Clinic on Hwy 10 will be open to serve your pet's medical and surgical needs. You can call ahead at 905-495-9907 or go directly there. The Emergency Veterinary Clinic is located on the south east corner of highway 10 and Wexford Rd, just one block north of Bovaird (Highway 7).

From all of us at Mountainview Animal Hospital,
we wish all of you

**A Very Merry Christmas. A Joyous Holiday Season and
A Happy New Year!**