

Cats Live Longer, Healthier Lives Indoors

To borrow a line from Shakespeare about cats: “To be [indoors], or not to be [indoors], that is the question.”

The answer is clear when you realize that the average lifespan of an indoor cat ranges from 10 to 20 years, whereas cats who go outdoors typically live only 2 to 5 years.

Cats who are allowed to roam outdoors face huge safety and health risks, and sadly, some pay for that freedom with their lives.

- Even seemingly street-savvy cats are frequently hit by cars.
- Roaming cats can get lost or picked up by Animal Control, then euthanized.
- Some cruel people abuse cats.
- Your cat could become ill from a neighbor’s lawn chemicals or could eat poison that a neighbor has put outside for pests.
- Even friendly outdoor cats are sometimes forced to defend themselves against other, aggressive cats. Cat fights can be deadly serious, and unvaccinated or sick cats can transmit diseases, especially via bite wounds. These diseases range from upper respiratory infections to feline immuno-deficiency virus to the fatal feline leukemia.
- Other animals pose a fatal threat to wandering housecats, such as hawks, foxes, raccoons, and even some dogs. Along with possible exposure to rabies, a cat who has been attacked can end up with painful wounds or abscesses, resulting in an expensive trip to the vet if your cat is lucky enough to survive the attack.
- Your cat also might wander into a neighbor’s shed or garage and become trapped inside when the neighbor closes the door.
- In winter, your cat may suffer frostbite if outdoors for too long.



Cats Live Longer, (Continued)

Healthier Lives Indoors

- In addition, parasites found outdoors, such as fleas, ticks and ear mites, can leave your cat feeling itchy and miserable. Aside from bringing fleas into your home, your wandering cat could get worms, and pass them on to you.
- If your outdoor cat hasn't been spayed or neutered, she or he will most certainly be the parent of unwanted litters!
- Keeping your cat inside is also courteous. Your neighbors probably don't appreciate your cat using their yard or garden as a litter box, and may worry that their dog might chase your cat.

Some people argue that it's natural for cats to roam outdoors. But when you think of all the dangers that your beloved kitty may encounter outside, is it really worth that risk? Indoor cats who have been spayed or neutered live happy lives: sunning themselves on a warm windowsill, climbing cat



towers instead of backyard trees and playing with you or other kitties inside your home. And with patience, indoor/outdoor cats can be transitioned to live happily indoors—while doubling their life expectancy!

Animal Friends asks all cat adopters to sign an agreement stating that they will never allow their new kitty to roam freely outdoors. Your cat is a loving part of your family, and we want you to share a long, happy life together—safely and indoors!

This article is dedicated to Mattie, a young kitty who died outside as I was working with her to eventually bring her indoors. I hope nobody else suffers that kind of heartache and loss. L.A.S.