

Should I Keep My Cat Indoors?

One decision every cat owner must make is whether or not their feline friend should be allowed outdoors. One should consider that the average life span of a totally outdoor cat is about a year and a half, while a cat that resides totally indoors is expected to live upwards of 15 years.

- You are most likely aware of the obvious dangers of car fan belts, tires, toxic plants, dogs and cruel people. However, some life-threatening dangers include:
 - **Diseases** that have no vaccines such as Feline Aids or vaccines that are not reliably effective against diseases like Feline Leukemia;
 - A cat can get **heartworms** through mosquito bites;
 - **Antifreeze** has a sweet taste and is irresistible to cats. A cat who has walked through a small pool of antifreeze and cleans its paws has ingested a fatal dose;
 - Cat collars which do not provide breakaway or stretch releases have killed cats by **choking or hanging**;
 - **Fighting** among outdoor kitties not only spreads disease, it can result in painful abscesses which require medical attention (an untreated abscess can kill a cat);
 - Cats can ingest **toxoplasmosis** while eating prey that has been exposed. Not only can it kill a cat, it is contagious to people and can result in severe birth defects.
 - **Fleas, ticks and mites** can also carry life threatening diseases and getting them out of your home is expensive and time-consuming.
 - **Ringworm** can be contracted by a cat while outdoors digging in the dirt and is contagious to humans.
 - Cats do not observe property lines and your neighbor may not have a problem shooting, trapping or poisoning your family pet.
- So, instead of allowing your cat outside, you can:
- Provide a window perch for them and put out a bird feeder for entertainment.
 - You can also put them in a safe outdoor enclosure or a screened in porch and give kitty some way to get back into your house if they need.