

The (Not So) Great Outdoors For Cats

The great outdoors may sound like fun for a cat — but there are many dangers lurking outside for our feline friends.

Just as we can no longer let our dogs roam loose for their sake as well as our neighbor's sake, we must now protect our cats from a growing number of outdoor hazards. The MSPCA strongly advises that all cats be kept indoors only, or allowed outside only under supervision. Some of the things that can easily happen to your feline companion that is allowed outside are:

Cars - Your cat can get hit by a car.

Rabies - If nothing else convinces you to keep your cat indoors only, the increased presence of rabies in New England should! Once contracted, it is fatal and presents a serious risk to your family, as well. It is much more likely that people will contract rabies from a family pet that tangles with a wild animal, rather than the wild animal itself. When your cat goes out by itself, you have no idea where it has been or what animals it has come into contact with. Vaccinating your cats and dogs is the LAW.

Dogs or Other Animals - Dogs or other animals can attack, severely injure or kill your cat. This is not something that could happen — it happens all the time.

Parasites – Ticks and fleas are a problem not only for cats, but for you too, if they get inside your house. The best way to prevent fleas and ticks? Keep the cat in a flea-free environment — inside your home! A flea collar does not work if the cat keeps going outside. Cats are hunters by nature. Many cats eat small wild animals and become infested with parasites such as tapeworms, roundworms, hookworms, and ear mites

Wildlife - While outside, your cat could become injured, or killed by a wild animal, or attack and cause problems for area wildlife. (*In our area, coyotes have frequently killed cats and kittens.*)

Diseases and Catfights - Cat fights can and do result in serious injuries or abscesses and pass deadly feline diseases like Feline Leukemia (FeLV) and Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV). Upper respiratory infections (URI) and Distemper are also serious threats to cats that go outdoors — especially if they are not vaccinated. Even if your own cat is vaccinated, the risk of coming into contact with infected cats is far greater when your cat is going outside. Remember no vaccines afford 100 percent protection.

Cats will live longer, healthier lives when kept indoors only. And remember, keep a breakaway collar and an ID tag on your cat at all times. Include your phone number on the ID tag. If a visitor drops by or the children are in and out, your cat may slip out the door — an I.D. tag could help save your feline companion's life!

YOU ARE GAMBLING WITH YOUR CAT'S LIFE BY ALLOWING IT OUTSIDE! Every time you open the door you take a 50-50 chance with your cat's life! Do not take a chance! Fill your home with love and keep your cat (safe) inside!

This article was taken from the MSPCA website: www.mspca.org.