



Outdoor Cats

Assessing the risk of an outdoor lifestyle is imperative for your cat's wellbeing. There are dangers found outside that do not exist within a protected home environment. Allowing cats outdoors decreases their protection, while increasing their risk of being injured or exposed to infectious diseases.

HEALTH, SAFETY & ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

WILDLIFE

Domestic cats retain highly developed predatory skills, even when kept as a companion animal.

This can result in the unnecessary deaths of local & vulnerable wildlife such as birds and small animals.

A domestic cat is not native to these ecosystems, so their "natural" environment is not the outdoors.

Example: outdoor cats may exhibit predation at bird feeders.

VEHICLES

Cats that are hit by cars can develop numerous injuries, requiring emergency treatment.

During colder months, cats will sleep on the tops of tires, or underneath car hoods, that have recently been running & are still warm.

Cats do not have the innate instinct to avoid busy streets, which can lead to fatal accidents. Drivers may also swerve to avoid cats, which can result in car accidents as well.

ANIMAL ATTACKS

Outdoor cats are at risk of being attacked by other animals.

On the surface, bite wounds may look relatively minor, but often results in severe damage underneath.

Animal fights can result in severe injuries or even disease transmission.



DISEASE & INFECTIONS

Many feral & stray cats may carry diseases that can be passed on to domestic outdoor cats if they come into contact.

Viral infections such as feline leukemia virus (FeLV) & feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV), can be passed from cat-to-cat via bite wounds (spread through saliva).

These are immuno-suppressive diseases that are not treatable & can result in a variety of health problems.

Wild animals can carry other diseases, such as rabies.

OVERPOPULATION

Outdoor cats are the direct cause of the overpopulation of the feral cat community.

This contributes to the spread of disease & the reduction of small animal/wildlife populations.

Outdoor cats significantly contribute to overcrowded animal shelters, whether it's due to abandonment, lost cats, or domestic cats reproducing with other stray/feral cats too.

A fertile cat can reproduce 2 times a year, delivering 4-8 kittens per litter.

HEALTH & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS:

WHILE OUTDOORS, CATS ARE LIKELY TO INTERACT WITH A VARIETY OF OTHER COMPANION ANIMALS & WILDLIFE. THESE TYPES OF INTERACTIONS HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO INCREASE THE RISK OF DISEASE EXPOSURE & TRANSMISSION.





Outdoor Cats

Allowing cats outdoors can pose serious health and environmental risks, resulting in decreased welfare. Outdoor cats can end up with injuries that require veterinary care; and in some cases, can even become fatal.



HEALTH, SAFETY & ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

NUISANCE BEHAVIORS

Unneutered male cats will spray urine (a strong, foul odor) to mark their territory.

Cats will frequently dig, urinate, and defecate on yards and in gardens.

Excessive nocturnal vocalizations are a result of fighting & mating behaviors of unneutered & unspayed cats.

CAT BITES & SCRATCHES

Cats are known to carry a variety of zoonotic diseases (transmittable to humans).

Outdoor cats can cause injuries with both their teeth & claws, thus injecting bacteria (infections), other germs, rabies, etc. under the skin of the victim.

Interactions with other cats can result in conflict/fights, in response to overlapping territories & the sharing of resources.

HUMAN CONFLICT

Some people will find a cat, assuming that it is a stray & has no owner/home. This may result in the finder keeping the cat, and not turning the animal in to a shelter or authorities.

This is especially likely to happen if the cat is not properly microchipped or wearing a collar with tags.

PARASITES

Several common parasites can be picked-up by a cat when venturing outdoors.

Resulting in a variety of symptoms, such as: scratching, skin infections, vomiting, diarrhea, etc.

Outdoor cats can contract internal & external parasites, such as: fleas, ticks (resulting in Lyme disease), lice, ear mites, ringworm (a fungal infection), roundworm (spread by animal feces), tapeworm infection, etc.

These parasites can infect humans too.

TOXINS

There are various poisonous substances that cats can be exposed to when let outdoors.

Diverse populations of plants, found in open access areas such as gardens and forests, are toxic to cats. Example: cats are highly sensitive to lilies.

Pesticides sprinkled on neighboring gardens or lawns.

Toxic substances such as ethylene glycol (antifreeze) can be stored in garages or sheds.

Non pet-friendly salt (used during winter months) can damage cats' paws.

Secondary poisoning can occur if cats eat mice/rodents that have been targeted for rodenticide.

Kidney failure can be a result of ingesting poisonous substances.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS:

IT'S IMPORTANT TO REALIZE THAT DOMESTICATED CATS ARE NOT A NATIVE PART OF MOST ECOSYSTEMS. THEY CAN HAVE THE SAME DEVASTATING EFFECT ON THE ENVIRONMENT THAT MANY OTHER NON-NATIVE SPECIES DO.

