

KEEP CATS INDOORS!

Cats may love to go outside, but for their own good, keep them in. Although cats are smart, alert, and adroit, they are no match for the many perils that await them outside. That's why the average indoor-only cat lives up to three times longer than the cat who goes outside. Consider these threats:

■ **Disease.** Feline leukemia and feline immunodeficiency virus are only two of the diseases that are passed from cat to cat and once contracted, result in the eventual death of the pet. And outside cats are even more likely than dogs to come into contact with rabid wild animals.

■ **Parasites.** Outdoor cats suffer from fleas, ticks, ear mites, and worms that indoor cats are not generally exposed to.

■ **Poisoning.** Poisons can be found in lawn chemicals, bait left out to kill rodents, auto antifreeze and other sources.

■ **Other Animals.** Fights with other cats, dogs and wildlife often leave cats maimed or injured.

■ **Cruel People.** Cats are often the victims of burning, tarring and feathering, and other tortures. Animal dealers may collect outside cats for sale to research facilities. Outside pets are at the mercy of the people they encounter.

■ **Traps.** It is estimated that over 100,000 cats are caught in traps each year. Those who aren't killed may suffer for days before being released and often lose limbs from the injuries.

■ **Traffic.** Most outdoor cats die prematurely from auto accidents. It is a myth that cats are "streetwise" about cars. No matter how alert, a cat is no match for a fast-moving vehicle.

■ **Pet Overpopulation.** Unaltered cats allowed to roam and mate at will account for millions of the cats who must be euthanized each year because there aren't enough homes for them. Allowing unaltered animals outside is irresponsible and at the root of the terrible pet overpopulation problem.

Cats can be completely happy inside if you provide them with toys, good care, and most importantly, lots of love and attention. If you've got a kitten, start it out right by never letting him or her outside. Older cats who are used to the "great outdoors" can make the transition to being indoor cats with time and attention. For more information on the risks to outdoor cats or converting your feline to life inside, contact

the Westchester County Department of Health. We'll be glad to help your cat achieve a happy and safe life inside with you.

To report all bites and exposures, or for additional information, call
Westchester County
Department of Health

(914) 813-5000
24 hours a day

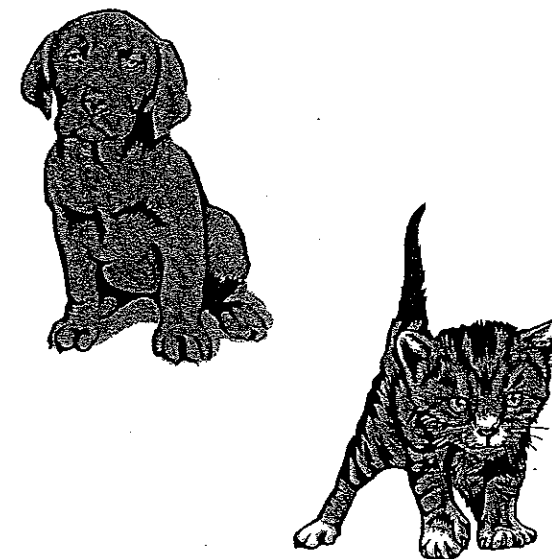
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Pets & Rabies

Your Dog or Cat Trusts You



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Joshua Lipsman, M.D., M.P.H., Commissioner

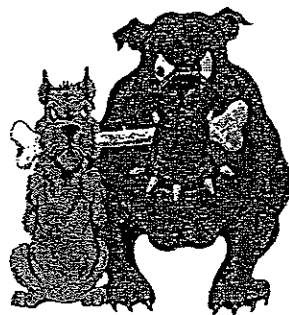
How often do dogs and cats need to be vaccinated for rabies?

Rabies vaccinations for dogs and cats over three months of age are effective for one year. Revaccinations, following this first injection, will be effective for up to three years. Be sure your pets have up-to-date rabies vaccinations - it's the law. Pets too young to be vaccinated should be kept indoors. Vaccinated pets serve as a buffer between rabid wildlife and humans. By protecting them, you will also reduce your risk of exposure to rabies.

What else can I do, other than vaccinate my pets, to protect them from rabies?

- Do not attract animals to your home or yard.
- Keep your property free of exposed garbage, pet foods, stored bird seed, etc.
- Tightly cap or put away garbage cans. Feed pets indoors.
- Don't leave your pets outdoors unattended or let them roam free. Even if your animals are indoor pets, they may be at risk.

- Board up any openings in your attic, basement, porch or garage. Cap your chimney with screens.



What should I do if my pet gets into a fight with another animal?

DO NOT TRY TO SEPARATE FIGHTING ANIMALS. WEAR GLOVES WHEN HANDLING YOUR PET IMMEDIATELY AFTER AN ATTACK. Saliva from the rabid animal could be on your pet's fur. Exposure to rabies can occur if large amounts of saliva enters an open cut or mucous membrane (eye, nose, mouth). These types of non-bite exposures are rare. Isolate your pet from other animals and people for several hours. Call your veterinarian. Your vaccinated pet will need a booster rabies injection within five days

of the attack. An unvaccinated animal exposed to a known or suspect rabid animal must be strictly confined for six months or humanely destroyed.

What if my pet bites someone; what should I do?

Advise the person bitten to wash the wound immediately with lots of soap and water and seek medical attention. Share information on when your animal was last vaccinated. If an apparently healthy domestic dog or cat bites a person, it must be captured, confined and observed daily for signs of illness for 10 days following the bite. If the animal remains healthy during this period, it did not transmit rabies at the time of the bite.

What animals get rabies?

Rabies is most often seen among wild mammals such as raccoons, bats, skunks and foxes. Cats, dogs and livestock can also get rabies if they are not vaccinated. Deer and large rodents, such as woodchucks, have been found rabid in areas affected by rabies.

What are the signs of rabies in an animal?

The first sign of rabies is usually a change in the animal's behavior. The rabies virus attacks the part of the brain that controls behavior. The animal may become unusually aggressive or unusually tame. Staggering, convulsions, spitting, choking, frothing at the mouth and paralysis are sometimes noted. Many animals have a marked change in voice. If your pet appears to be sick or acts abnormally, suspect rabies.

