

## YOUR CAT: INDOORS OR OUT

If you allow your cat to wander around outside on her own, without your supervision, she is susceptible to any of the following tragedies:

- Being hit by a car
- Ingesting a deadly poison, like antifreeze or pesticide
- Being trapped by a unhappy neighbor or picked up by animal control
- Contracting a disease
- Being attacked by a roaming dog, cat, or wild animal
- Becoming lost and unable to find her way home
- Encountering an adult or child with cruel intentions

### **Benefit of keeping your cat indoors**

- You are able to create a stronger bond with your cat. An indoor cat is easier to spend quality time with than an outdoor cat that comes and goes.
- Your cat is safe from outdoor tragedies. There are so many fatal situations that your cat may encounter when roaming, like a car or another animal.
- Your cat will live longer; the average life span of an indoor cat is 12 to 20 years, versus 1 to 9 for an outdoor cat.
- You are able to reinforce litter box habits and catch any changes, like straining to pee or blood in her urine.
- You can control what your cat eats, which will help manage her weight and prevent things like diarrhea from occurring.
- You can monitor your cat's health. Cats are good at hiding illnesses and injury. If you only see your cat from time to time, you may not notice if she has lost weight or if she isn't drinking enough water.

If you currently have an outdoor cat, you can change her behavior. It will take time and patience, but it might save her life. Remember to always keep your doors closed and teach your children the importance of keeping the doors closed, too. **To help her be a happy indoor cat, provide her with the following:**

- Provide plenty of toys (see our handout: "Cat Toys and How to Use Them"). By providing your cat with a variety of toys that she can chase, bat around, pounce on, and chew you can prevent boredom. She'll also learn to love the indoors as a result.
- Provide scratching post (see our handout: "Cat: Destructive Scratching"). Scratching is a normal cat behavior, which cats love to do, however when done on the carpet or furniture can be

destructive. By providing a variety of scratching posts you can prevent any destruction and allow her the chance to still stretch her muscles, mark her territory, and work off some energy.

- Provide a room with a view. Include perches in this room, so she can watch the birds. Your cat will also enjoy sunning herself by the window.
- Provide her with some cat grass or cat nip. She will enjoy nibbling it and rolling in it.
- Teach you cat to walk on a harness and leash, so together you can enjoy the outdoors. A harness and leash will allow you to supervise your cat when outdoors but keeps her safe from any dangers.