

Making Your Cat's Summer A Fun and Safe Time

By *PURRsonals.com*
Marketing Team



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Introduction

As winter gloom and spring rains give way to long, sunny summer days, thoughts turn to vacations, barbecues, gardening, and lazy days by the pool. As human beings, we obviously recognize and can avoid the dangers associated with the dog days—or in this case, cat days--of summer. Our cats, however, depend on us to keep them safe and provide a safe environment for them.



Whether at home or away, the human environment is created for, well...humans. Pets enrich our lives and become an actual part of the family, but we must open our eyes to see the dangers our daily lives create for them. Toxic garden and house plants, along with household fertilizers, insecticides and cleaners present potentially fatal hazards to adventuresome kitties. Travel creates stressful situations for both you and your cat, whether you choose to take her along or bring in a pet sitter to keep her at home. Additionally, summertime pests, like fleas, ticks and mosquitoes affect the health and comfort of pets, as well as people, and the heat of summer, itself, can be the most dangerous hazard of all, causing your pet to overheat or dehydrate. Taking a few simple precautions and having a travel plan in place can alleviate many of these potential problems altogether.

Traveling the Highways and Byways With Your Cat

Dogs have long dominated the pet travel industry. With special cafes and parks devoted to dogs and their owners, cat lovers have often felt a little left out. However, according to the 2006-2007 National Pet Owner's Association survey, more than 38-million American homes claim a cat, while a little more than 44-million own dogs. The gap is definitely closing. With the pet industry being an estimated 37-billion-dollar per year business, cat products have become increasingly available, and popular, on the market, to the point that traveling with your cat is a much more enjoyable and convenient proposition than at any time in the past.



Readying Your Cat for Travel

Before planning a trip, you want to make sure that your kitty is in optimum travel condition. Plan a trip to the vet a few weeks in advance, so he can check for any developing conditions and make sure existing conditions are under control. Your cat's shots will need to be up to date, and if you need a refill on any prescriptions, take care of that now.

Additionally, discuss with your vet whether your cat should be sedated or tranquilized for the trip. Cat owners, experts and vets have varying opinions about this topic, so make sure all of your questions get answered before you leave your vet's office. You should never sedate your cat if you are flying, however, and many experts would say that if your cat has to be tranquilized to travel, it shouldn't be taken. But there are times when travel for an animal cannot be avoided, so the decision is up to you and your vet.

It's best to avoid heavy sedation. There are also holistic alternatives to tranquilizers that will take a little of the edge off your cat's anxiety: Valerian, Rescue Remedy and other herbs and homeopathic remedies can calm your cat down, but not make them sleepy or doped up. It's best to ask your veterinarian about these solutions, or talk to a holistic vet (you can find a local holistic vet by visiting The American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association - www.ahvma.org)

You must also make sure that your cat is properly tagged before you travel. Your cat should have a collar with a tag that provides the cat's name, your vet's name and address, and preferably your name and phone number. Another solution is to purchase a tag that maintains all of the information in a database, and if your cat is lost, and then found, the finder will call the global recovery service—like ReturnMoi Pets (www.returnmoipets.com) —and reunite the owner and cat quickly and easily!



Some owners tattoo their cat or have the vet microchip them. Even if a cat is tattooed or microchipped, it's best to also have a tag on their collar and harness. As noted below, a tattoo is not easy to see, and since many shelters or vet clinics do not have universal scanners, many times microchips are not "read" – making both of these solutions not foolproof. Another problem is many owners do not maintain their contact information with the tattoo or microchip registries and sometimes if the cat is sold, the new owner does not update the information. Even if the tattoo is found, or microchip scanned, if the information is not current it will not help reunite the cat with its owner. A global recovery service pet tag is a better solution, either as a standalone option or together with a tattoo or microchip.

You will also want to make sure that your pet carrier has proper identification on it, as well as an emergency number. Even if you are traveling by car, it's important to tag your carrier, in case you were incapacitated and an emergency professional needed to take your cat to a shelter until help could come.

Pet Tags and More

Global Recovery Service

www.ReturnMoiPets.com

Microchipping

Ask your vet about microchipping.

To learn more visit: www.avidmicrochip.com

To register your cat's tattoo:

National Pet Registry 914-679-2355

Tattoo-a-Pet (800 Tattoos).

What You Need to Travel With Your Cat

When you decide your cat is coming along for the trip, then you'll need to pack some things for your cat too! You will need the following to travel with your cat:

- Carrier - soft-sided if flying, soft- or hard-sided if traveling by car or RV
- Pad or towel for inside the carrier
- Pan - Small hard-sided pans for traveling by car or RV and in the hotel room. If flying, you can purchase a soft-sided litter pan from companies such as SturdiProducts which folds up for easy travel and storage.
- Litter - for the length of the trip; keep some in the pan if traveling by car or RV; put some in a small zip lock to take in a carry-on bag if flying.
- Paper towels
- Garbage bag for litter
- Scoop
- Towel to put over the carrier for shade
- Water bowl
- Bowl for dry food
- Bowl for canned food
- Treats (just in case!)
- Pop-up tent or home for hotel/strange home

- Harness w/tag - you should put a harness on your cat in addition to a collar because when you have your cat outside of the carrier, having a harness and lead on it will give you additional control over the cat. Also put a tag on the harness in case the collar came off. You will also need a harness on your cat when flying because of the same reason: when you take your cat out of the carrier to go through the metal detector, you will need a good hold on your cat in case it gets spooked by the noise and commotion at the airport.
- Collar w/tag
- Lead - before you take your cat out of the carrier - even if it's in the car - hook the lead up to the harness, not the collar!!!
- Zip lock bag with relevant information: contact information, veterinary records, Health Certificate if needed, and any medical information you may need to take with you)
- Emergency kit - any medications, holistic remedies or calmatives, bandages and peroxide in case of an injury
- Food - favorite canned and/or dry food - enough for the length of the trip
- Bed
- Toys
- Canned food
- Dry food
- Bottled water - good to have on the plane and in the car so you can give your cat some water.
- Clip on fan - in case it gets hot and you need to cool off your cat.
- Brush or comb
- Shampoo - in case your cat has an accident in his cage and needs to be cleaned up.
- Dry wipes - for those occasional accidents

Planning the Trip

Many hotel chains today are pet-friendly and some even provide special amenities for pets and their owners. However, this is not an across-the-board case, and individual hotels within major chains may deviate from the company policy on pets. Before you start the first leg of your trip, it's important to plan your stops along the way. Check the sidebar information for a list of pet-friendly hotels.

Pet Friendly Hotels

Best Western	La Quinta Inn & Suites	Sleep Inn & Suites
Candlewood	MainStay Suites	Staybridge Suites
Clarion Hotel	Marriott Hotels & Resorts	Studio 6
Comfort Inn & Suites	Motel 6	Suburban Extended Stay
Courtyard by Marriott	Quality Inn & Suites	TownePlace Suites by Marriott
Econo Lodge	Renaissance Hotels & Resorts and JW	SpringHill Suites by Marriott
Fairfield Inn by Marriott	Residence Inn by Marriott	
Holiday Inn	Rodeway Inn & Suites	

Even when staying in a hotel that welcomes pets, it's a good idea to confine your cat when you're not in the room. It's too easy for a sneaky kitty to slip out while maid-service is tidying up. A good idea is to take along a collapsible pet tent or pop-up shelter, such as cat fanciers use at shows. Your cat will be comfortable enclosed in the small space with her own bed, and you can avoid the nightmare of looking for a lost cat in a large hotel. Cat carriers—hard-sided or soft-sided--and popup tents or “houses” for use in hotel rooms or strange homes, can be purchased at local pet stores or online.

You'll also need to take along some items which will make your life easier and give your cat more of a sense of security. A favorite scratching post and a couple of toys can keep your kitty contented and occupied. The following items will also be helpful, both in the car and in the hotel:

Once you've taken care of all the pre-travel details, you're ready to take your feline on vacation. Keep in mind that you will be limited to car or plane travel, as railroads do not accept cats as yet. If you're planning a cruise, contact your specific ship line for regulations pertaining to pets. They may have a kennel, but you'd be wise to ask whether cats and dogs are separated. You'll have to consider whether taking your cat on a cruise is worth the trauma being enclosed with yapping dogs for seven days will cause your pet.

Car Travel

You may be ready, even excited, to take your feline companion on vacation with you, but before you put that kitty in the car carrier and hit the open road, take a good, honest look at his disposition. If you have the kind of cat that spits, froths, yowls, and scratches endlessly on every trip to the vet, you'd do better for yourself and your cat to leave him with a trusted sitter.

So, before planning the ultimate road trip, take a few practice runs. Get your cat used to being confined in the carrier for longer periods of time by taking short drives, then longer, etc., until you feel certain your cat is comfortable with travel. The type of carrier you choose and the way you set it up can go along way in helping your cat to feel safe.

Two types of carriers exist: a soft-sided model and the traditional hard plastic. While a soft-sided carrier would “feel” better to your cat's backside, a hard plastic carrier is more impact resistant. Many states now require that pets be restrained, both for the animal's safety as well as the driver's, as a car carrier can become a deadly projectile in an accident. So whichever type of carrier you choose, be sure to use either your seatbelt restraints or a specially designed carrier restraint system.

The key to a successful road trip will be keeping your cat comfortable in the car. Place his favorite bed in the carrier, and he'll be much more likely to settle down for a nice, long catnap. Be sure to bring along bottled

water and his favorite food. Dry food is more convenient on trips if your cat is accustomed to eating it. You'll also need to plan to stop about every two hours to allow your cat to stretch and get a little exercise. And also to use the pan! Always have a pan filled with litter in case your cat has to use it and most of the time your cat will let you know if he needs to use the pan by crying until you stop and let him out. Also have your scoop, a bag for the litter and paper towels handy in case you need them.

If he doesn't get car sick, keep him on his regular feeding schedule, but save the biggest feeding for the evening when you've stopped for the night. And finally, **never, never, never leave your pet in a hot car with the windows rolled up.** If you must leave your cat in the car while you go into a restaurant or rest-area facility, park in the shade and roll your windows a third of the way down. Create a cross breeze by opening opposite windows, front and back. Give your pet a drink both before and after you go inside. Most people don't realize this, but on a 78-degree day, temperatures in a car parked in the shade can exceed 90 degrees, and hit a scorching 160 degrees if parked in the sun. Because animals don't sweat, even a few minutes in a hot car can cause a fur-covered pet to experience potentially fatal heat stroke. Be aware that leaving your car running with the air-conditioner on can be just as dangerous. In 2003 a police dog in Texas died when the car's air-conditioner automatically shut off to keep the engine from overheating and began blowing hot air, driving the inside temperature up. To avoid tragedy, when traveling with your pet try to choose fast food restaurants where you can dash in, use the restroom facilities, and get back to the car quickly to eat your food. If the line Even fifteen minutes in a hot car can cause your cat to have heat stroke.

Airplane Travel

Airplane travel presents another challenge for pet owners. You'll need to check with your airline for specifics on regulations and keep in mind that these rules are subject to change, so check back before you go to the airport. It's important to know that you will be required to place the carrier *underneath* your seat, **if you want to keep your cat with you on the plane. In that case, either a soft-sided or a hard-sided carrier will do.** If, however, you're willing to let the carrier and cat go on as checked baggage, a hard-sided carrier is required.



It's always recommended to take a direct flight, so that your cat is not shuffled between planes, handled more often than necessary or, worse case scenario, lost. You must remember to check with your airline if temperatures at your point of origin or destination will be above 85-

Which Airlines Allow Cats?

For specific information on various airlines and their regulations pertaining to flying with your pet, go to: www.petswelcome.com/milkbone/frameairtrav.html However, be sure to call your airline to make sure regulations have not changed.

degrees Fahrenheit or below 20 degrees F. An overnight flight will keep temperatures cooler in the baggage department for summer travel. If you are concerned about the plane taking off without your cat on board, you can ask a flight attendant to confirm with the captain that your carrier is safely aboard before you leave the gate. Some airlines even deliver a claim ticket to the pet owner once the carrier is loaded.

Here are some additional things to be mindful of when flying with your cat:

- **Ticket:** When you make your reservation, tell them you are traveling with a cat. Airlines only permit limited number of pets on board at the same time. You will pay for your cat's ticket when you check in your baggage.
- **Health Certificate:** You will need a health certificate from your to fly! It must be dated no sooner than 10 days from the date of travel.
- **Pet Passport:** If you're traveling overseas, it's easier to do so and does not require quarantine. But you'll still need to check the country's regulations that you're visiting and find out if the new Pet Passport will work. Talk to your vet about international travel requirements.
- **Vet Records:** You'll need proof of rabies shots for interstate or international travel. Also have all other shot records with you.
- **TSA:** You will need to remove your cat from its carrier when you go through airport security. Make sure you also have your cat's ticket and health certificate out for the TSA to review.
- **Weather:** If the weather is too hot or cold, make sure you are prepared for it!
- **Delays:** In today's world of flying, we all have experienced delays! When traveling with your cat, make sure that you have in an overnight bag: fold-up litter pan, small bag with litter in it, a few paper towels to clean your cat or pick the pan, small garbage bag, Rescue Remedy or other calmative, water bowl, small bottle of water, small food dish, small bag of dry food to nibble on.
- **Harness and lead:** Always put a harness on your cat in addition to a collar! Cats have gotten loose at airports, and a harness with a lead gives you better control over your cat when you have to take her out of the carrier to go through airport security.
- **Under the seat:** Make sure you check with the airline you're flying about the dimensions of the carrier. It needs to fit under the seat in front of you. But you'll also want to make sure that the cat has plenty of room in the carrier when flying. SturdiProducts and Sherpa Bags make bags that are roomy, but can easily be pushed down a little to fit under the seat.

If you've taken the right precautions, planned ahead, and made sure your cat is up to the stress of a long trip, then sharing a vacation with your favorite pet can create lifelong memories. If however, you're not sure your feline will handle the stresses inherent in a trip, you should look at options for leaving her behind, no matter how much you'd like to keep her with you. In the end, it's all about your cat's well-being, after all.

When the Owner's Away, Kitty Can Stay....Home

Many cats do not like to travel, or an owner may not want to travel with their cat (or have an exotic vacation planned that kitty is not invited to go on!). So, the options are:

- Asking a relative, neighbor or friend to pet sit your cat
- Hire a pet sitter
- Board your cat at your vet's clinic or a boarding facility (all-cat or dog/cat kennels)

If you ask a relative, neighbor or friend to do it, it's always nice to bring them something back from your vacation as a "thank you". And follow the same guidelines that you would with a pet sitter. Just because they may be familiar with your cat, don't count on them to automatically know everything about caring for your cat. You want to make this "service" easy and pleasant for whoever has volunteered to help you out!

Pet Sitters

Some people prefer to leave their cats with a close friend, whom they know will be responsible about caring for the pet. But if you aren't so lucky as to have a friend who would do this for you, then you might consider a professional pet sitter. While you can ask a neighbor or relative to look after your pet, and they would drop by to feed and water the animal, a professional pet sitter usually offers much more for your beloved companion.

Pet Sitters

Professional associations for recommending pet sitters:

National Association of Professional Pet Sitters
(800-296-PETS)

Pet Sitters International (336-983-9222)

A professional pet sitter will spend quality time with your cat, giving it a sense of security, of someone being home with it, and the sitter may also provide extra services at little or no additional cost. Many sitters will bring in the mail, pick up newspapers, water plants, and generally give your home a lived-in look to deter would-be robbers.

How Do I Choose a Sitter?

The best place to start in choosing a qualified pet sitter is by asking your vet and other friends who are pet owners for a referral. Word of mouth referrals are much more reliable and will give you greater peace of mind about leaving your cat with a stranger. You can also look in the Yellow Pages under Pet Sitting Services. Alternatively, you can also contact the National Association of Professional Pet Sitters or Pet Sitters

International for a referral (refer to the sidebar information for phone numbers). Both of these associations provide accreditation to qualified pet sitters.

You will most likely want to interview a few pet sitters, so be sure to have a list of questions ready to go. The Human Society of the United States recommends you find out the following:

Getting Your Cat Used to the Pet Sitter

Cats look at their humans as part of the family, and don't always take well to strangers. Before leaving your cat with your chosen sitter, have her come over a few times, each time for a longer period, so your cat can become accustomed to this new person being in the house. After the first visit, begin leaving the house for a while, to allow the sitter and your cat to interact alone. When you return, watch your cat for any signs of stress or fear. Typically, when cats are left in their own environment with a qualified sitter, they remain at ease, but be sensitive to any sudden changes in your cat's behavior. This could signal that the sitter you've chosen isn't exactly what you thought you were getting.



And don't forget to go over the following information with your pet sitter:

- Go over scheduled feedings - and if any medications are given, that needs to be discussed too
- Food - dry and/or canned - what to feed, how much and when
- Play time - show the pet sitter your cat's favorite toy and ask that they play with the cat for at least 10 minutes a day
- Medicine with instructions
- Vet records
- Contact information - your cat's vet, neighbor and/or family member in case of an emergency. (It's also nice to tell your vet beforehand if you have a pet sitter coming in and arrange beforehand to leave a payment method in case your cat gets injured or sick while you're away, and the pet sitter has to take her to the vet)
- Litter, scoop and bags handy so it makes litter pan cleaning easier for the pet sitter
- Carrier, harness and lead handy in case your pet sitter needs to take the cat to the vet or if there is an emergency

You should be able to relax and have a fun trip without worrying about your cat if you've done your due diligence and preparation. Tell your sitter that you'll be calling every couple of days to check on things, then let your professional take care of everything while you relax!

It's also wise to tell your pet sitter to keep certain doors shut, or keep your cat in a favorite part of the house instead of having free roam of the entire house. This will keep your cat confined, and less chance of him running out the front door when your pet sitter arrives! And also you won't have any surprises to come home to – such as plants eaten, planters knocked down, shredded curtains, etc. And keep your cat's collar with tag on at all times in case there is an emergency!

Boarding Your Cat

Pet sitters are not for everyone. Some people prefer not to have strangers in their homes, or aren't comfortable with the fact that no one will be checking up on how well their cat is being treated by the sitter. In this case, you might consider boarding your cat. Several types of kennels exist from luxurious cat condos to traditional boarding kennels. The type you choose will depend on your preference and pocketbook. Check with your veterinarian too as many times they will board your cat! And if your cat needs medications or has an illness-like diabetes-it's best to board you cat with the veterinarian so they can give the cat its medicine and monitor it while you're away.

If you choose a kennel that services both dogs and cats, ask if the cats are separated from the dogs, maybe in another part of the building. You'll also want to take a look at the area where your cat will be housed. The area should be roomy enough to allow the cat to stretch, use her litter box, and lie down comfortably. Providing your cat's favorite bed and a few toys or a scratching post from home can also help your cat relax.

Most kennels will require you to prove that your cat is healthy, so plan a vet visit a couple of weeks before you leave your pet. Bring shots up to date and ask for a health certificate, but also discuss the feline Bordetella vaccination with your vet. Cats do get their own variety of the contagious virus commonly called kennel cough. A simple intranasal vaccination can prevent this potentially life-threatening respiratory illness.

No matter where you board your cat, you'll need to take a few things along with you so your cat will still "feel at home":

- Food - dry and/or canned
- Toy or two
- Bed
- Medicine (with instructions if not boarded at the vet clinic)
- Vet records (if not boarded at the vet clinic)
- Favorite treats
- Contact information - your cell phone and where you're staying, and neighbor or family member as an emergency contact.



Regardless of the choice you make as far as what to do with your beloved cat during vacation, summer should be a fun time of relaxation and unwinding. Be sure that you feel 100-percent comfortable with the decision you've made. If not, listen to your instinct, and do what you believe is best for both you and your cat. You will have a much more enjoyable vacation!

Making Home Safe for Your Cat

Who says you have to leave home to have a great summer vacation? Many people enjoy relaxing at home – gardening, barbecuing with friends, lounging poolside. Your own backyard can be a great sanctuary from the hectic pace of your everyday life. And who better to share those moments with than your best friend, your *feline* best friend. But if you want your cat to get as much enjoyment from your yard or deck as you do, you'll have to take a few precautions to make sure it's a safe and happy environment for her.

Plant Dangers

Cats of course, are naturally curious animals. Why else would we have that awful saying about cats and curiosity? Overall, cats who regularly enjoy outside time are less likely to inspect vegetation than they are to look for something exciting to pounce on, but instances of cats becoming poisoned from sampling plants is not unheard of. Additionally, indoor cats are more likely to nibble on houseplants out of sheer boredom. It may be nearly impossible to assure that every plant in your yard is non-toxic, as a majority of plants have at least one part, either root, leaf, stem, fruit, etc., that is an irritant, if not poisonous. However, knowing which plants to avoid can go along way in helping ensure your cat's safety when the two of you are digging side by side in the garden. The noted list included plants known to cause anything from skin irritation to irritable bowel to fatality.



Almond (Pits of)	Cycads	Iris Ivy	Poison Oak
Aloe Vera	Cyclamen		Pokeweed
Alocasia		Jack in the Pulpit	Poppy
Amaryllis	Daffodil	Janet Craig Dracaena	Potato
Apple (seeds)	Daphne	Japanese Show Lily *	Pothos
Apple Leaf Croton	Datura	Java Beans	Precatory Bean
Apricot (Pits of)	Deadly Nightshade	Jessamine	Primrose
Arrowgrass	Death Camas	Jerusalem Cherry	Privet, Common
Asparagus Fern	Devil's Ivy	Jimson Weed	
Autumn Crocus	Delphinium	Jonquil	Red Emerald
Avacado (fruit and pit)	Decentrea	Jungle Trumpets	Red Princess
Azalea	Dieffenbachia		Red-Margined Dracaena
	Dracaena Palm	Kalanchoe	Rhododendron
Baby's Breath	Dragon Tree		Rhubarb
Baneberry	Dumb Cane	Lacy Tree Philodendron	Ribbon Plant
Bayonet		Lantana	Rosemary Pea
Beargrass	Easter Lily *	Larkspur	Rubber Plant
Beech	Eggplant	Laurel	
Belladonna	Elaine	Lily	Saddle Leaf Philodendron
Bird of Paradise	Elderberry	Lily Spider	Sago Palm
Bittersweet	Elephant Ear	Lily of the Valley	Satin Pothos
Black-eyed Susan	Emerald Feather	Locoweed	Schefflera
Black Locust	English Ivy	Lupine	Scotch Broom
Bleeding Heart	Eucalyptus		Silver Pothos
Bloodroot	Euonymus	Madagascar Dragon Tree	Skunk Cabbage
Bluebonnet	Evergreen	Marble Queen	Snowdrops
Box		Marigold	Snow on the Mountain
Boxwood	Ferns	Marijuana	Spotted Dumb Cane
Branching Ivy	Fiddle-leaf fig	Mescal Bean	Staggerweed
Buckeyes	Florida Beauty	Mexican Breadfruit	Star of Bethlehem
Buddist Pine	Flax	Miniature Croton	String of Pearls
Burning Bush	Four O'Clock	Mistletoe	Striped Dracaena
Buttercup	Foxglove	Mock Orange	Sweetheart Ivy
	Fruit Salad Plant	Monkshood	Sweetpea Swiss Cheese plant
		Moonseed	
Cactus, Candelabra	Geranium	Morning Glory	Tansy Mustard
Caladium	German Ivy	Mother-in Law's Tongue	Taro Vine
Calla Lily	Giant Dumb Cane	Morning Glory	Tiger Lily *
Castor Bean	Glacier IvyGolden Chain	Mountain Laurel	Tobacco
Ceriman	Gold Dieffenbachia	Mushrooms	Tomato Plant (green fruit, stem and leaves)
Charming Dieffenbachia	Gold Dust Dracaena		Tree Philodendron
Cherry (pits, seeds & wilting leaves)	Golden Glow	Narcissus	Tropic Snow
Cherry, most wild varieties	Golden Pothos	Needlepoint Ivy	Dieffenbachia
Cherry, ground	Gopher Purge	Nephytis	Tulip
Cherry, Laurel		Nightshade	Tung Tree
Chinaberry	Hahn's Self-Branching Ivy	Oleander	
Chinese Evergreen	Heartland Philodendron	Onion	Virginia Creeper
Christmas Rose	Hellebore	Oriental Lily *	
Chrysanthemum	Hemlock, Poison	Peace Lily	Water Hemlock
Cineria	Hemlock, Water	Peach (pits and wilting leaves)	Weeping Fig
Clematis	Henbane	Pencil Cactus	Wild Call
Cordatum	Holly	Peony	Wisteria
Coriaria	Honeysuckle	Periwinkle	
Cornflower	Horsebeans	Philodendron	Yews --
Corn Plant	Horsebrush	Pimpernel	e.g. Japanese Yew
Cornstalk Plant Croton	Horse Chestnuts	Plumosa Fern	English Yew
Corydalis	Hurricane Plant	Poinciana	Western Yew
Crocus, Autumn	Hyacinth	Poinsettia (low toxicity)	American Yew
Crown of Thorns	Hydrangea	Poison Hemlock	
Cuban Laurel	Indian Rubber Plant	Poison Ivy	
Cutleaf Philodendron	Indian Tobacco		
	Iris		

Some of the plants in the list are houseplants and some are garden plants. You want to be sure that each area of your home, inside and out, is safe for your pet. Keep in mind, also, that even if your cat isn't inclined to purposely eat plant material, there could be pieces of twigs or leaves on her coat that she might ingest accidentally when cleaning her fur. Being familiar with the symptoms of poisoning could save your cat's life in emergency:

- drooling
- repeated vomiting
- diarrhea
- abdominal pain
- suddenly collapse
- excessive irritation (red, swollen, blistering or raw) of the skin, the mouth or throat
- respiratory distress
- hallucinations
- coma

Any of the above signs require an emergency trip to your vet. Fortunately, however, skin irritation is the most likely side effect from plant poisoning. Redness, scaly patches, swelling, sneezing, and eye irritation can all indicate that your cat has been in contact with a toxic plant. If you believe your cat has come in contact with a skin irritant, wash the affected area completely and call for a veterinarian appointment.

Plants, of course, aren't the only poison danger to your kitty. Household chemicals, rat poison, gasoline, and



antifreeze all present life-threatening hazards to curious cats. If you use poison to control rodents, be sure to check often for dead mice. If your cat finds the body first, and chews on it, the poison is so potent it could kill her. Garden chemicals, such as fertilizers and pesticides are another threat to pets. Check your local garden center for organic, non-toxic fertilizers. Options typically include dehydrated cow manure, dried poultry manure, fish emulsion, bloodmeal, cottonseed meal and mixed organic natural fertilizers. For controlling unwanted bugs, try one of the following pet-friendly, earth-conscious recipes:

Salt Spray: This solution is used for cabbageworms and spider mites.

- 2 tablespoons of salt
- 1 gallon of water
- Just mix and spray!

Soap and Water Spray: Bugs don't care for soap and water. Wasps and yellow jackets can't fly if you spray their wings with it. Spider mites, mealy bugs and aphids are also killed by soap and water.

- 1 tablespoon dish soap
- ½ gallon of water
- Mix and spray!

The truth is, even cats owned by the most protective owners can end up in a dangerous situation, so if you think your cat may have been poisoned, first try to identify the specific poison. Most products containing chemicals are labeled for identification. Read the label. If this does not give you a clue to the possible toxicity, call the emergency room of your local hospital and ask for information from the Poison Control Center. Alternatively, call the National Animal Poison Control Center at (800)548-2423 or (900)680-0000. This hotline is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. There is a credit card charge for the consultation, but your cat's life may depend on it. Your vet will be better equipped for the emergency if you can tell him what poison your cat has been in contact with.

Poisons Around the House

In cases of poisoning call: (Fees may apply, so have a credit card ready)

National Animal Poison Control Center (888) 426-4435

Animal Poison Hotline – a joint service provided by North Shore Animal League America (NSAL) and PROSAR International Animal Poison Center (IAPC).

1-888-232-8870 Staffed 24-hours a day, 7 days a week.

National Pesticide Telecommunications Network
Toll free number (800-858-7378)

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E-Mail: nptn@ace.orst.edu

Web site: nptn.orst.edu

Service sponsored by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Oregon State University provides information about pesticide products and poisonings, toxicology, environmental chemistry, and other pesticide-related issues.

Dr. Dan's Pet Stuff Online Newsletter:

www.dr-dan.com/heartwor1.htm

Ticks, Fleas and Mosquitoes, Oh My!

Even if your cat does not go outside, if you live in an area where there is water, dogs or is humid, you can have fleas! And fleas LOVE cats just as much as they do dogs!

Did you know that cats ingest up to 50-percent of the fleas on their body during grooming? Those fleas may be carrying pathogens, like the plague or typhus. And if you have used a flea killer on your cat, she is taking in that poison as well. Fleas and ticks cause a host of problems for pets, and possibly their humans, including:

- Severe Skin Irritation
- Tape Worm
- Anemia
- Lyme Disease
- Babesiosis: [bab-EE-see-OH-sis] A rare parasitic disease that is transmitted to people by infected ticks.
- Ehrlichiosis: [air-lick-ee-OH-sis] A newly recognized bacterial disease that is spread by infected ticks
- Tick Paralysis
- Flea Allergy Dermatitis (an allergic reaction to the flea's saliva) in pets causes severe itching that leads to chewing, compulsive biting, licking, and scratching.

While fleas are an incessant danger, they can be particularly difficult to detect on a cat. Try the following trick to check for fleas:

- Place your cat on a sheet of white paper
- Comb her with a fine toothed comb
- Look for "flea dirt" (which is flea feces) as well as the presence of fleas on the paper. Flea dirt is generally black and comma-shaped.

When moistened and rubbed lightly, flea dirt will leave a telltale brownish-red stain.

If your cat has fleas, you'll need to not only take care of your cat, but also his environment. You can't use a lot of the pesticides as they are poisonous for your cat. So here are some ways to get rid of fleas:

How to Rid Your House of Fleas Naturally

- Treat every room where the cat(s) has/have been.
 - Vacuum both carpets and floors using the nozzle to clean along the baseboard and in cracks. Eggs and larvae can be there! Throw the vacuum cleaner bag out after that.
 - If you have tile or wood floors, wax them! The wax will smother any remaining larvae or eggs.
 - Sprinkle diatomaceous earth in all cracks and carpet with salt. The diatomaceous earth will cut the protective shell of the fleas, and the salt will dehydrate them. Leave it overnight and vacuum up the next day. Make sure it's not a humid or rainy day when you do this!!
 - Another option is to steam clean your carpet, rugs, sofa, chairs, etc.
 - Put pillows, pet bedding, comforters and any clothes worn while grooming your cat, into the dryer on hot for fifteen to twenty minutes.
- Lay old towels -- white or light colored - on sleep places to watch for any other flea "dirt".

- Cat - bathe your cat in a shampoo from your vet that is for either ONLY cats or CATS AND DOGS. Do NOT use shampoos just for dogs! Then give Capstar so it will kill any fleas and eggs on your cat. Talk to your vet first before putting one of the other flea products on your pet: depending on its age and health, it may not be recommended.
- Add odorless garlic juice in their food...that will help ward off fleas and also mosquitoes (see below)
- Use a natural cleaner to clean it's environment and wash its bed. Then put diatomaceous earth around the baseboards, under cushions and on the rugs. That is not harmful to your cat, and it will kill the fleas.

How do you know your cat has fleas?

- Scratching and biting - especially under the chin, behind ears and base of the spine
- Pulling out hair
- Shedding and bad spots
- Presence of small black dots, like pepper
- FLEAS!



Tick prevention is no less important than flea prevention, and like the battle against fleas, it is ongoing. Spraying your yard and home monthly will help considerably with both pests. Look for a spray containing the chemical fenvalorate, as it is environmentally friendlier than many other options. However, remember not to spray any chemicals where water run-off could take it into streams or storm-drains. Your vet will also have prescription flea and tick prevention available, so check with her for the best options.

Mosquitoes are another summer-time pest that can cause illness in your cat. Even if your cat does not go outside, if you live in a wet or humid area, you are going to have mosquitoes. And they get into the house easily when a door or window is open. In recent years, vets and cat owners have become increasingly aware that heartworm is a real and acute threat to cats. Treatment typically results in a 70-percent fatality rate, so prevention is the best answer. Amazingly, indoor cats are more likely than outdoor cats to get heartworm, because outdoor animals do build up a slight immunity to the heartworm larvae, according to Dr. Dan of the Pet Stuff Online Newsletter. Have your cats tested annually for heartworm, and consult with your vet to see whether your they would be better served by the monthly or the daily preventive medicine. The choice, of course, will be yours in the end, but it's important to remember that there is no cure for adult heartworms.

The West Nile Virus is another mosquito-borne disease that affects animals, as well as humans. It causes neurological symptoms and can end in fatality. These tips can help protect your cat from mosquito borne illness:

- Keep pets indoors during peak mosquito hours – dawn, dusk, and early evening.
- Eliminate standing water around your home.
- Prevent pets from coming into contact with dead birds or squirrels that may have died as the result of the virus.
- Use only approved mosquito repellent on your pet; make sure to read the label first to determine if the product is approved for use in pets.

Additionally, ask your vet for suggestions about non-toxic, environmentally friendly flea, tick and mosquito repellent. And contact your local veterinarian immediately if your pet exhibits any respiratory or neurological signs, such as incoordination, depression, decreased appetite, difficulty walking, tremors, abnormal head posture, circling, and convulsions, coughing, sluggishness or respiratory distress.

The Long Hot “Cat Days” of Summer



Whether you travel or stay home, spend time with your cat indoors or out, remember that your cat depends on you to be his protector as well as his provider. He can't foresee the problems that you can, and he can't take matters into his own hands if you fall down on the job. Look for potential problems with fresh eyes, from a cat's level. That may mean getting down on all fours and crawling around the floor, checking nooks and crannies for forgotten mouse poisons or bug traps. Do your plants have leaves that hang down invitingly? Is

your pool pump and hot tub covered? Try to think like your cat as you inspect your home and yard. Look for things that move, have interesting colors or sounds, and plants and chemicals that are poisonous.

Finally, remember that your cat can't sweat. While summer heat may be an annoyance to you, it can be deadly to a fur-covered cat. Try to maintain your home at an even, cool temperature if your cat lives indoors, by running the air conditioner and keeping blinds and curtains drawn during the day.

If you don't have air conditioning, run fans and open opposite windows for cross breezes. (Be sure your windows have secure screens, however!) Keep plenty of water available to your

cat, and if she lives outdoors, change her water at least twice during the day to keep it from becoming too warm. Try putting ice cubes in her water or throwing a couple on the floor for her to play with. Another suggestion is to wrap a bag of frozen peas in a dishtowel, then place it in your kitty's bed. Once she feels the coolness, she'll want to snuggle down against it. Make sure you're familiar with the symptoms of heat exhaustion as noted in the sidebar.

If you see any of these warning signs of heat exhaustion, attempt to calm your cat by petting her slowly and speaking soothingly to her. Use a damp, cool towel to rub under her neck and on her belly. Try to get her to take some water and, if necessary, immerse the cat in cool water. Dehydration and heat stroke can be potentially deadly, so don't delay in getting her to the vet once you've dampened her.

Your cat is a member of your immediate family, and no less dependent on you than a child would be. With a little forethought and planning, your summer can be just as much fun, and safe, for kitty as for you.

Signs of Heat Exhaustion

- Panting
- Anxiety, possibly demonstrated by pacing
- Increased heartbeat
- Respiratory distress or hyperventilation (Breeds with flat noses may exhibit this earlier because of compromised airways.)
- Dark red gums
- Lethargy
- Increased internal body temperature. Your cat's internal temperature should be between 100.5E and 101.5E F. A temperature of 104E or more is a definite warning sign.

About PURRsonals.com

PURRsonals.com—an Animal Magnetism company—is the leading cats-only social networking web site for both cat owners and their cats. It also is the first Web site that allows single cat owners to meet and build relationships.

PURRsonals.com is a one-stop Web site that allows cat lovers to meet new friends or new partners; share their stories, photos and videos; and keep up with the current cat news and other cat entertainment online. More enhanced stories are available real time at PURRsonals TV.

Launched in 2007, PURRsonals.com was the first web site to provide a social networking opportunity for all cat lovers worldwide. With more than 100 million cats in homes worldwide, PURRsonals.com has surpassed the language barriers, opening up communication between cat lovers from North America to Europe, Asia to Australia through our enhanced online communications.

PURRsonals.com's free membership allows cat lovers to create a profile, post messages, post videos and photographs, chat through video and audio, post to forums and blogs, read Kitty Literate's Blog, and keep up with current news items at Cat News and view hours of cat entertainment at Fun Stuff.

For the single cat lovers, PURRsonals.com allows them to meet and build relationships based on their mutual love of cats. PURRsonals.com allows singles who understand the unique bond between an owner and their cat, to meet and build relationships. Cats are finicky about their owners...and cat owners are finicky, just like their cats, about the people who they date. PURRsonals.com takes the 'finicky-ness' out of dating!

All members fill out a brief survey that helps them network with other cat lovers based on their interests and preferences. Profiles can feature photos and videos of both the cat lover and their feline friends, while single cat owners can keep track of their "encounters" and "flirts" with other single cat lovers.

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