



## Cat Chat: Considerations for a Feline Friendly Family

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We often think of dog as man's best friend, but ever increasingly, families are including cats in the "Best of the Best" cat-egory . Across the country cats are growing as the largest pet population in urban households. Cats have always held a somewhat mystical quality in our lives because of their aloof attitude, quite nature and self assuredness. Felines are survivors but we need to take special care to make sure that they do well in our care. Too often we fail or do not realize what their special needs are. Historically felids are desert animals but that does not mean they are well adapted for our Central Oregon climate. It is imperative to provide basic care including fresh water especially in the summer months. Urinary tract disease in cats can be the result of not enough fresh drinking water. This is especially true for male cats and can result in a fatal condition when unable to urinate if completely blocked. Sometimes inappropriate urination can be attributed to urinary tract disease. This is one of the frustrations for some households and unfortunately is the leading cause of euthanizing or re-homing a pet. Diet, behavior, litter type and even pan placement all factor into this condition.

Cats are solitary creatures yet have a very social structure. Fourth of July fireworks and summer thunderstorms drive cats insane. Often they will be terrorized into hiding or running away when they get scared. This can mean disappearing into the deep recesses of the garage, under the hood of the car or in the wheel wells. Starting the car and driving off will have severe consequences so use extreme caution. Tapping the hood or lightly beeping the horn will coax out a frightened feline. The motor home, RV or boat can also be a refuge where they will feel safe. Yet, if it is seldom used, a cat may vanish for days or weeks costing a precious life. Make sure that these vehicles are kept secure; doors closed and check as potential hiding places. Having proper identification is essential. Statistically cats at shelters do not often get found so if your cats goes missing check regularly and often. Microchipping your pets is simple and a sure way to have a permanent solution to finding your pet. Break away collars for outside cats with tags are also good. Bells can be used to bring your attention to a lost cat and will help warn birds of their stealthy presence.

Summer holidays mean travel for the whole family. Many of you will take your cats with you to visit family or that quick trip to the coast. Some cats do great as travel companions while others go mad. Your veterinarian can make sure they are healthy for the journey and are

properly immunized. Some may require sedation or tranquilizers for the commotion. Others may need to be boarded in a kennel. Make arrangements early for pet friendly establishments so you won't get any unexpected surprises and not have any room at the inn. Take plenty of Fluff's food especially if it is a specific nutritional diet. Bring extra medication and have your refills done before you leave.

Shaving cats has become popular but getting that special quaff can be worse than a bad hair day. Our summer is short but the sun is still strong. Sunburns are possible and skin cancer is a great risk for light colored cats. It is much better to comb out the fur and thick undercoat before they can form into mats. Scissor cuts are way too common. Feeding essential fatty acids helps and is simpler than a trip to the doctor to suture a wound.

Life under the juniper tree is bliss, but cats do get into trouble despite being recognized as having nine lives. Adopting your next family pet will be the cat's meow. Enjoy the dog days of summer with your whole family, including your cats.