

40 Ways to Protect Your Cat

Keep your cat safe by adopting and following these safety guidelines.

Beth Krippner

1. You know your cat. If she's acting strange, err on the side of caution: Take her to the vet.
2. Antifreeze is sweet but deadly. If your car leaks, get it fixed, and keep antifreeze far out of reach from your pets. Even one teaspoonful is fatal.
3. Do not underestimate your cat; it can fall out of a window, says Pat Coughlin, a cat owner in Norway. Install protective screens or storm windows to let your cat safely enjoy the view.
4. If your cat tends to chew electrical cords, keep her in a cord-free room when unsupervised, says Larry Lachman, an animal behaviorist in Carmel, Calif. Also, spray cords with safe spicy or bitter-tasting products.
5. If you use clumping litter, groom your cat frequently to remove particles that may accumulate and interfere with elimination.
6. Keep your cats indoors. They'll be healthier and happier, says Ceridwen Attwood, a cat owner in Washington. Outside they're exposed to other animals, risk getting run over by cars and are exposed to the elements.
7. Do not let in strays just for the heck of it, Lachman says. Having strange cats around can overstress your own cat, which may lead to fighting, biting and soiling or spraying around the home.
8. Never hit your cat. Use spray bottles with water if discipline is necessary. Physical punishment doesn't teach your cat appropriate behavior.
9. Consider using clay litter for kittens. If your cat accidentally ingests some litter particles, clay is nontoxic in small quantities.
10. Safely confine your cat when workmen or visitors are in your home [to prevent escape], Lachman says. A bathroom, laundry room, bedroom or cat carrier is ideal for this purpose.
11. Only use cat-specific flea preventives in vet-approved dosages to avoid triggering a dangerous reaction in your cat or kitten.