

Should My Indoor Cat Wear ID Tags?

CatChannel expert Jeanne Adlon, professional cat sitter, discusses reasons for all cats to wear collars and ID tags.

By Jeanne Adlon

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Q: Should my indoor cats have collars and ID tags?

A: I am a firm believer in giving your cat a fighting chance to be returned home if for some reason she gets lost, or she's an indoor cat and unexpectedly bolts out the door. However, you have to make sure whatever you put on your cat is safe, practical and comfortable.

I remember meeting a new client to go over the details for the care of Buddy, a lovely gray tabby, who was also female. I noticed Buddy was wearing a cat harness. When I asked why, I was told she had access to an outdoor garden and the harness was put on to tell her apart from the other cats who played there. However, when I petted Buddy, I could feel the harness was tight — very tight. It seems the harness was on Buddy at all times and she had gained weight since being strapped into it.

Though her owner had observed Buddy scratching at the harness repeatedly, she thought it was probably fleas. I assured her the harness had to come off. Unfortunately, we could not even unbuckle it — there wasn't a millimeter of spare space, poor kitty. We eventually had to cut it off, and you never saw a happier harness-free cat leap across the room.

Whether you have indoor or outdoor cats, I suggest getting them a breakaway collar and definitely attach an ID tag to it. Only a small percentage of lost cats ever get returned home and it only takes one time for your cat to run out the door for you to say, "He's never done that before!" Also, I feel that a harness is best only when taking a cat out on a leash — and we all know how often that is! Make sure you periodically check collars for comfort and wear and tear. You will rest easier knowing your kitty can be identified, just in case.