

## Health News

### **Cats: Just what the doctor ordered**

*By Ruth MacPete, DVM*

As cat fanciers, we all know that our feline friends make us feel better. They give us unconditional love, friendship and companionship. Now there is new scientific evidence that suggests that besides making us feel better, cats might be good for our health. According to a study by the Minnesota Stroke Institute presented earlier this year at the American Stroke Association meeting in New Orleans, cat ownership might lower your risk of having a heart attack by one third. Researchers examined 4,435 people between the ages of 30 and 75 and found that over a 20-year period, people who never owned cats had a 40 percent greater risk of dying from heart attacks than those with cats. They also found that people without cats had a 30 percent higher rate of death due to any sort of cardiovascular disease.

How cat ownership lowers cardiovascular risk is still unclear, but it might be a result of many different factors. Some studies suggest that sharing your home with a pet lowers cholesterol, triglycerides, blood pressure and stress. Karen Allen, Ph.D., professor at the State University of New York, Buffalo, examined people in one of the most stressful jobs: stockbrokers. She studied 48 stockbrokers with high blood pressure, none of whom had animals.

**\*\*Get the September 2008 issue of CAT FANCY to read the full article.\*\***