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### Statement on Confinement of Owned Indoor Cats - December 2007

Veterinarians are encouraged to educate clients and the public concerning the dangers associated with allowing cats free-roam access to the outdoors.

- Free-roaming cats may be exposed to injury, suffering, and death from
  - vehicles
  - attacks from other animals
  - human cruelty
  - poisons
  - traps
- Additionally, these cats have an increased potential to be exposed to feline-specific and zoonotic diseases.
- Lastly, adherence to this policy also reduces predation of native wildlife populations, a goal and policy of the AVMA and the AAFP.

Veterinarians are also encouraged to educate clients about the importance of an environmentally enriched indoor environment. Enriching the indoor environment or allowing cats to be in a strictly supervised outdoor environment or enclosure helps prevent boredom, stress, and inactivity common causes of behavior problems, and diseases such as obesity and its associated risks (diabetes mellitus, hepatic lipidosis, osteoarthritis, heart disease), and feline interstitial cystitis.

Many feline behavior problems can be prevented or treated with an enriched environment includes stimulation and materials to allow cats to perform their normal behaviors. Cats need companionship, and enjoy both interactive toys and hunting games. They too enjoy playing on their own and rotation of toys prevents boredom. Cats need items in the house to allow them to perform their normal behavior –cat scratching posts to scratch in desirable locations; and cat trees, perches, or shelves to allow for climbing and to increase of overall space in the home.

References:

AAFP [Feline Behavior Guidelines](#), Overall KL, Rodan I,

[Indoor Cat Initiative](#), Buffington CA Tony, OSU College of Veterinary Medicine