



## THE GREAT INDOORS

### IT'S BEST TO KEEP YOUR CAT INSIDE



**Sickness and Disease-** Ticks, fleas, intestinal parasites, ringworm, and ear mites are just a few of the dangers that can threaten your cat's health and wellbeing. If you live in an area with other outdoor cats, your cat can also be exposed to feline leukemia, feline immunodeficiency virus, and feline interstitial peritonitis, all of which can be fatal. Unvaccinated outdoor cats also run the risk of contracting and spreading feline viral rhinotracheitis, calicivirus, panleukopenia, feline distemper, and rabies.

**Wildlife and Predators-** A cat's hunting instinct can threaten the lives of wildlife, such as songbirds, baby bunnies, and other small creatures. Your cat is not the only predator out there and can quickly become prey to coyotes, foxes, or birds of prey, all of which live in Hampton Roads.

**Accident or Injury-** Animal traps and poisons are often used to target pests, but outdoor cats are susceptible to these threats as well. There is also the risk of getting hit by a car, getting caught in dangerous weather, or becoming injured and unable to make it back home.

**Lost or Stolen-** There is always a possibility of your cat wandering too far from home, getting picked up by animal control in another area, or coming across a stranger with unkind intentions. Approximately 2 million pets are stolen every year, and sadly not every person is a cat person.

**Solution-** Bring the outside in. Cats are social creatures and need appropriate enrichment to live a happy and healthy life. You can place a cat tree next to a window, provide horizontal and vertical scratching posts, engage in interactive play, and provide cat grass or other treats. You can even explore adding a catio if you have the outdoor space.

For more information about the importance of keeping your cat indoors, visit [vbspca.com/the-great-indoors](http://vbspca.com/the-great-indoors).