



Feline Forum

Courtesy of:

Keep the Lead Out!

Lead poisoning occurs more frequently in cats during the spring and summer. This may be due to increased exposure to sources of lead, such as lead-based paint, old ceramic

A Car Can be a Death Trap

Do not confine your cat in a car during the warmer months. A car with the windows rolled up and parked in the sun can quickly reach temperatures of 180°F within minutes. Heat stroke (hyperthermia) occurs when a cat breathes air that is warmer than its internal temperature (100 to 103°F).

Signs of an impending heat stroke include rapid breathing, panting, salivating and/or vomiting. Mild cases of heat stroke can be treated by immersing the cat in cool water or wrapping it in cool, wet towels to reduce its body temperature. For more serious cases of heat stroke, take your cat for immediate treatment to a veterinarian. Heat stroke can be life-threatening.

The information for *Feline Forum* has been prepared by the Cornell Feline Health Center, Cornell College of Veterinary Medicine, Ithaca, NY. Copyright 1991.



pottery, old linoleum and caulking, lead sinkers, and lead batteries. A common source of lead for cats is the dust from renovations of older homes. In grooming, the cat will often ingest the lead-laden dust.

Adult cats can absorb about 2 percent of ingested lead, while kittens absorb a much higher percentage. Absorbed lead is circulated throughout the body by the blood and enters the bones and soft tissues.

Damage primarily occurs in the brain, nerves and kidneys. Lead is slowly excreted through urine and bile. But elevated lead levels may persist for years in cats exposed to excessive amounts of lead.

In cats, the first signs of lead poisoning include loss of appetite, lethargy, weight loss, and intermittent vomiting. In severe cases, blindness, convulsions and incoordination may occur.

If your cat develops signs of lead poisoning, contact your veterinarian immediately. Your veterinarian can determine if it is lead poisoning and administer the proper treatment.



When the Paws Begin to Claw

Clawing and scratching behavior is a grooming technique that loosens old layers of the claw. It may also be a form of marking territory. Whatever the motivation for scratching, it is often an undesirable behavior, especially if the sofa or draperies become a scratching site. Many owners have cats declawed to eliminate the problem, but an alternative is to prevent bad scratching habits from ever developing.

If kittens are encouraged to use a scratching post, they usually will not abuse furniture. The best teacher of a kitten is its mother, so choose kittens from queens that use a scratching post.

A good scratching post should have loosely woven material to allow the cat to hook its claws in the fabric. Because cats scratch more often when they first awaken, locate the post near the cat's usual sleeping place.

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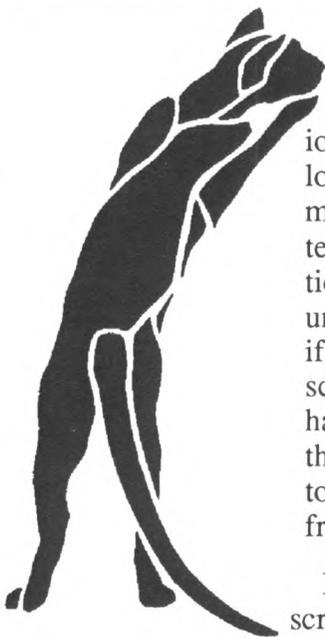
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