



## Feline Forum

Courtesy of:

### Holiday Hazards

'Tis the season when holiday decorations abound, providing dangerous temptations to the inquisitive cat. Bright, shiny ornaments, tinsel, ribbons and bows are just some of the items which a cat may accidentally ingest while playing. Usually most of these items pass through the digestive tract without any complications, but occasionally intestinal blockage, perforation of

the intestine, gastritis, or constipation can occur.

Vomiting, not eating, dehydration, swelling of the abdomen, and the absence of bowel movements are danger signals indicating that your cat may have an obstructed intestine. Intestinal blockage can lead to death if treatment is delayed. In severe cases, where the blood supply is cut off to the bowel, immediate surgery is required.

### Dry Home Heat Causes

#### Feline Skin Problems

Heating the home with wood burning stoves and other forms of dry heat can cause dry cracking skin, foot pads and noses. Occasionally the hair coat will appear dry and dull. Often cats exhibit an increase in itching and scratching during the winter months due to living in a dry environment. A good preventive measure is to maintain a humidity level of 30 to 50 percent in the house.

The information for *Feline Forum* has been prepared by the Cornell Feline Health Center, Cornell College of Veterinary Medicine, Ithaca, NY. Copyright 1990.



Make the holidays safe for your cat by keeping decorations out of your cat's reach. You can also minimize your cat's temptation for decorations by providing a safe form of distraction, such as catnip.

### Birth Control for Cats

Each year there are millions of homeless pets which are destroyed because they are never adopted. If current trends continue we can expect the cost in dollars and pet lives to continue to spiral upward. However, there is a reasonable solution to the problem — birth control. *You, as a cat owner, are responsible for your cat's sexuality.*

Female cats that are six months or older should be spayed if they are not to be used in a breeding program. Spaying is the surgical removal of the reproductive organs (i.e. ovaries and uterus). The removal of those organs also eliminates the behaviors associated with an intact female during heat cycles, such as excessive vocalization, restlessness, treading, rolling and extreme affection. Spaying also reduces the risk of reproductive diseases such as uterine infections, ovarian cysts and tumors, and mammary tumors.

Male cats should be neutered before they become sexually active, usually before six months. The testicles are removed surgically. This procedure not only prevents the male cat from impregnating a female cat, but also seems effective in reducing or eliminating fighting, roaming, and territorial marking with urine by intact males.

The cost of spaying or neutering is far less than the medical bills for associated reproductive diseases and sexually related behavioral problems. Also, birth control for cats reduces the problem of homeless kittens.

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