

# Leashes for Cats, Should they be Mandatory?

I vote yes, leashes for cats should be mandatory. Why are dogs not permitted to roam at will through neighbourhoods but cats are?

Last night we came home from a stressful day at the cottage spent cleaning up our property from the [storm damage](#). We also spied a black cat prowling around at the side of our house. It took off when my husband chased it away. Why did he chase it away? Because last year he watched the same black cat kill a baby bunny in our (private) backyard. This morning, we discovered a dead chipmunk on our back deck. Coincidence? I think not! We've seen a few baby bunnies in our yard recently, so we're hoping the cat did not get them too.

As you can probably tell, it annoys me to no end when I see cats in my yard. I believe it is irresponsible of cat owners to let their cats roam indiscriminately. Our backyard is an oasis for [birds](#), rabbits, chipmunks and the like, so cats are not welcome. Our backyard, our choice, right?

I have a good reason for this opinion, besides the fact that cats prey on small animals just to torment and kill them for their amusement. I am not amused.

## Cats and Toxoplasmosis

Years ago I suffered [three stillbirths](#). We were told the most likely cause was toxoplasmosis contracted from cat feces. Well, we have never owned a cat. But, several cats used our front garden as a litter box back then as it was hot and dry, sandy soil. When we first moved into our home, this south-facing garden was newly planted, so cats could access the soil easily. We've since covered that area with a veranda and moved

the garden out from the overhang of the house so it gets more moisture.

*Toxoplasmosis is a disease caused by the single-celled parasite Toxoplasma gondii (T. gondii). It is one of the most common parasitic diseases and infects nearly all warm-blooded animals, including pets and humans. Although cats are a necessary part of the life cycle of T. gondii, the parasite rarely causes clinical disease in them. While T. gondii seldomly causes significant symptoms in healthy adults either (see below for exceptions), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recently identified toxoplasmosis as one of five neglected parasitic infections of people due to its high prevalence.*

### [Cornell Feline Health Center](#)

*Toxoplasmosis is a common infection that is usually harmless. But if you get toxoplasmosis for the first time while you're pregnant, or a few months before you conceive, there's a small risk the infection could cause:*

*miscarriage*

*stillbirth*

*birth defects or problems after the baby is born – this is very rare*

[NHS](#)

## **Outdoor Cats**

I belong to a neighbourhood Facebook group where posts often discuss missing or found cats. There also seems to be a large presence of "lost cat" signs pasted on any flat surface on our streets. Am I the only one that finds it hard to believe people let their cats wander around the neighbourhood,

especially with the steady increase of coyote and fisher sightings in our neighbourhood? Perhaps if cat owners didn't let their cats roam, these wild animals would stick to the wooded areas. Instead, they are enticed by a buffet-like selection of victims.

## **Leashes for Cats**

Are leashes the answer? They certainly would be a start. If you want your cat to walk through the neighbourhood, take it for a walk on a leash. Just like the dog owners do.

And, while you're at it, take along a bag to scoop up their poop.

[photo credit](#)