



Should indoor cats wear flea collars?

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: At my cat's last veterinary visit, it was recommended that she wear a flea collar or get a monthly flea treatment. "Belle" is a completely indoor cat and has never had fleas. Why do I need to prevent her from getting them? -

- Carla G., Gulf Shores, Alabama
DEAR CARLA: While it seems totally reasonable to not treat Belle for fleas, there is always a risk of getting them. This is the same logic behind routine vaccinations -- it's unlikely that an indoor cat will be exposed to rabies, but there is always a chance.

I'll give you a personal example. Last fall, I took care of a friend's dog for a few weeks while they were away dealing with a family emergency. On the first day, I noticed that "Kerry" was chewing on his tail and his hair was almost gone at the base of his tail. I knew right away that he had fleas, and a visual check confirmed it. All of my pets are treated for fleas, even though my cat stays indoors. With my friend's permission, I treated Kerry with a topical flea treatment and kept him separated from the other pets for a few days until no live fleas could be found in his fur. I also monitored all my pets for fleas during his visit.

I hadn't planned on Kerry arriving with fleas, but his owner had forgotten to give him his monthly flea treatment for a couple of months. This unplanned situation could have been a real problem for me and my pets.

There's an old saying that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," and that is certainly the case with fleas, which can be hard to eliminate from your home once they get a foothold. There are many options today - not just collars - to prevent fleas from getting on your cat. Talk to your vet about the treatment they recommend for Belle.

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SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Retirement: Now what?

Some of us are new to retirement and the questions quickly become: Now what? What do I do with my days? Do I continue to set the alarm for the same time in the mornings?

If you planned in detail for your retirement and have a long list of things you intend to do, you know where to begin.

But the questions about what to do with our retired days can be poignant for those who perhaps didn't have a choice about retirement. Maybe there were health considerations. Maybe there were expectations of retirement upon reaching a certain age in a certain career. But for whatever reason, here's retirement, ready or not. Now what?

Start with a piece of paper and a pen. Make a list, the longer the better, of every interest you have. Ideally, somewhere on that list are the makings of worthwhile activ-

ities that are physical, social and mental.

Here are some random possibilities: explore photography, teach swimming at the YMCA, write a novel, knit or crochet hats and mittens for the local Santa fund next winter, create a family scrapbook with genealogy information and photos for the next generation, play pickleball at the rec center, become a Citizen Scientist (see CitizenScience.gov), join a walking group, take a pottery class with a grandchild.

Then there are the all-important brain-stretcher activities: learn to play piano or guitar (or brush up on old skills), take a college course, play chess online, take a computer class to upgrade your skills, learn a language online (see Duolingo.com), read a book a week or start a book club.

My personal list includes dogs at the animal shelter. There are lots of dogs who need to be taken on adventure walking afternoons to pick up their spirits. I can do that a few times a week.

Have you started your list?

"Outside of a dog, a book is man's best friend. Inside of a dog, it's too dark to read."

- Groucho Marx

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