

## AAFP Position Statement

### Meeting the physical and emotional needs of owned indoor cats

The American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) acknowledges that essential to preserving the optimal physical and mental health of our feline family members is providing them with an environment that meets their natural and normal behavioral needs. Several behavioral disorders and medical diseases seen in the feline patient are secondary to stress induced by an inappropriate

indoor living environment.

Cats are highly intelligent, naturally curious and active animals that humans have chosen to take into their homes and own as pets. 'A cat's level of comfort with its environment is intrinsically linked to its physical health, emotional wellbeing and behavior' (AAFP and ISFM feline environmental needs guidelines. *JFMS*; 2013; 15: 219–230). The veterinary profession

is obligated to educate cat owners/caregivers on how to provide the fundamental requirements for a suitably feline species-specific environment. Meeting the cat's essential environmental needs will reduce its stress and the incidence of both behavioral disorders and stress-related medical diseases.



The AAFP recommends these educational resources for veterinary professionals, team members and clients/caregivers:

- ❖ **AAFP and ISFM feline environmental needs guidelines** [catvets.com/guidelines/practice-guidelines/environmental-needs-guidelines](http://catvets.com/guidelines/practice-guidelines/environmental-needs-guidelines)
- ❖ **International Cat Care – making your home cat friendly** [icatcare.org/advice/making-your-home-cat-friendly](http://icatcare.org/advice/making-your-home-cat-friendly)
- ❖ **AAFP consensus statement – feline feeding programs: addressing behavioral needs to improve health and wellbeing** [catvets.com/guidelines/practice-guidelines/how-to-feed](http://catvets.com/guidelines/practice-guidelines/how-to-feed)
- ❖ **The Ohio State University – indoor pet initiative** [indoorpet.osu.edu/cats/](http://indoorpet.osu.edu/cats/)
- ❖ **The Ohio State University – basic indoor cat needs** [indoorpet.osu.edu/cats/basic-indoor-cat-needs](http://indoorpet.osu.edu/cats/basic-indoor-cat-needs)
- ❖ **The Humane Society of the United States – the cat's meow: catios** [www.humanesociety.org/news/catios-great-outdoors](http://www.humanesociety.org/news/catios-great-outdoors)

This Position Statement is intended to update and replace the AAFP's earlier Position Statement 'Environmental enrichment for indoor cats', published July 2011.

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