



## ANIMAL ANTICS

### Note for Pet Owners:

*Pet Patrol 365 provides this information for educational purposes only. You should seek the advice of your veterinarian if your pet is ill, as only they can correctly advise on the diagnosis and the recommended treatment for your pet.*

## CATS & COLLARS

### Does your cat need a collar?

The first thing to consider is whether your cat really needs to wear a collar. Some people need to attach magnetic or electronic keys to a collar in order to give the cat access through the cat flap. Others wish to have some form of visual identification (rather than just micro chipping) in case the cat becomes lost or run over, or just to make sure that the neighbourhood knows the cat is owned. These are all acceptable reasons for wanting a cat to wear a collar.



However, wearing a collar for the purpose of fashion or flea control (when other effective methods are available) should be considered carefully. Collars are potentially dangerous, so the following advice should be kept in mind when fitting them:-

### 1. Choosing a collar

If you are going to use a collar which has an elastic insert check to see how much 'give' there is. Some have very short bits of elastic which only allow it to stretch a small amount (enough to get a leg stuck through but not to get it out). Some of the 'all-elastic' collars do stretch a long way but may still pose a danger if they get caught on branches, etc.

Check the quality of the collar. There should be no sharp edges, stitching should not unravel and the buckle should be firm and not sharp.

Flea control can be achieved in many ways other than using a collar (using conventional veterinary 'spot on' products or by using complementary remedies). Flea collars are often left on long after the flea control chemicals have ceased to function and, if you do use a flea collar, check it regularly to ensure there is no reaction i.e. hair loss or skin reaction.

'Snap open' collars are good, assuming the weight of your cat is sufficient to open the buckle. The buckle will then open if the collar becomes trapped on something. Check how easily these buckles open - some are firmer than others. One suggestion is to hang a bag of sugar on the collar and see if it opens.

### 2. Fitting collars

Problems arise because collars are either too loose or too tight. When fitting collars they need to be quite firmly fitted (enough to get one to two fingers underneath), but regular checks are needed if the cat is growing. Kittens are best introduced to collars early (about 5 mths) and for short periods when the kitten can be supervised. It can be removed when the kitten is not being watched. The kitten will then be used to the collar when it wears it on a more permanent basis.

### Bells and bits

Bells, discs and other bits hanging from the collar can also be hazardous - the cat can either become caught on something by one of the attachments or get claws caught in the bell. Have a look at the type of bell on the collar - decide whether you actually need it there (if you are hoping it will scare away birds then it needs to have a good loud tinkle sound).

In summary, assess whether your cat needs a collar and, if so, make sure it is chosen and fitted correctly.

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**01342 851333 / 07974 728967**

[www.petpatrol365.co.uk](http://www.petpatrol365.co.uk)

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