

Microchipping Your Pet

- Many lost pets are never returned to their owners because they do not have any form of identification.
- Microchips are a way of permanently identifying your pet.
- Microchips must be registered with a microchip company to reunite you with your pet.
- Microchipping is a simple, quick procedure that can be performed by your veterinarian.

Why Microchip?

It is recommended that you identify your pet even if you don't plan to let him or her go outside. Even "indoor" pets can get out by accident, and many lost pets are never returned to their owners because they have no identification. Collars and tags are popular, effective methods of identification, but they can come off. Microchips, which are implanted just under the pet's skin, are one way to permanently identify pets.

What Is a Microchip?

A microchip is a tiny electronic device—about the size of a grain of rice—that uses radio waves to transmit stored information when it is read by the right kind of scanner. Microchips for pets generally store a unique identification number. They do not need a power source, and they have no moving parts, so they do not wear out. Microchips are made of a material that is compatible with body tissues, so rejection and infection at the site are rare.

After injection, the microchip becomes encased in the tissue at the injection site. It may move slightly, but it usually stays at or near the place it was injected. To read the chip, a compatible scanner must be passed over it. Different microchip companies use different chips; however, there are scanners that can read all kinds of chips.

The Microchipping Procedure

Many veterinary offices have the equipment to implant and scan for microchips. Each microchip

comes preloaded in a sterile syringe. To implant the chip, the veterinarian inserts the needle just under the pet's skin between the shoulder blades and pushes the syringe plunger. The entire procedure, like a regular injection, is very quick and does not require pain medication or anesthesia.

How the System Works

When a lost or injured pet is taken to an emergency room or shelter, he or she can be scanned for the presence of a microchip. If the pet has a chip, the scanner reads the pet's identification number. If the chip has been properly registered, the shelter or hospital can provide the number to the microchip company, which maintains the owner's contact information. The microchip company then contacts the owner, and the pet can go home.

Microchip Registration and Maintenance

- To complete the microchipping process, you must register your pet's microchip with the microchip company. Some companies charge an extra fee for registration. Unless the microchip company has your information, there is no way for the identification number on the microchip to link you with your lost pet.
- Keep the contact information you give the microchip company (e.g., street address, home and cell phone numbers) up-to-date. You may want to confirm this information every year.
- It is recommended that you continue to keep a collar on your pet and that you put a tag on the collar indicating (1) that your pet has a microchip and (2) the name of the chip manufacturer.
- During your pet's regular physical examinations by your veterinarian, the microchip should be scanned to ensure that it accurately transmits the identification number. Scanning is painless and only takes a few seconds.