

## The Importance of Microchips

Our pets are important members of the family and as much as we do not like to think about bad things happening to our family members, it is sometimes necessary to plan for the accidents that can occur. Break-ins, thunderstorms, fireworks, and natural disasters are just a few unplanned scenarios which can result in our pets “escaping” from the house. Collars are excellent forms of identification but are not permanent which is why microchips are such a useful tool.

What are Microchips?

Microchips are tiny radio frequency transponders that are about the size of a grain of rice. They are implanted with a needle just under the skin between the shoulder blades. When scanned with an appropriate scanner a unique identification number comes up registered to your pet.

Microchips do not need a battery and are designed to last approximately 25 years. Because they are inserted using a needle, anesthesia is not necessary and a chip can be implanted during a routine veterinary visit.

Does microchipping really reunite pets with their owners?

According to a study of more than 7,700 stray animals at animal shelters showed that dogs without microchips were returned to their owners 21.9% of the time, whereas microchipped dogs were returned to their owners 52.2% of the time. Cats without microchips were reunited with their owners only 1.8% of the time, whereas microchipped cats went back home 38.5% of the time. (Lord et al, *JAVMA*, July 15, 2009) For microchipped animals that weren't returned to their owners, most of the time it was due to incorrect owner information (or no owner information) in the microchip registry database.

Speak to your veterinarian about implanting a microchip into your four legged companion or if your pet is already microchipped, make sure the correct information is registered.

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