

DOES A MICROCHIP REPLACE IDENTIFICATION TAGS AND RABIES TAGS?

Microchips are great for permanent identification that is tamper-proof, but nothing replaces a collar with up-to-date identification tags when it comes to quickly identifying a found pet. But if a pet is not wearing a collar and tags, or if the collar is lost or removed, then the presence of a microchip might be the only way the pet's owner can be found.

WHAT KIND OF INFORMATION IS CONTAINED IN THE MICROCHIP?

The microchips presently used in pets only contain identification numbers. The microchip is not a GPS device and cannot track your animal if it gets lost. Although the present technology microchip itself does not contain your pet's medical information, some microchip registration databases will allow you to store that information in the database for quick reference.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH MICROCHIPS? HOW COMMON ARE THEY?

Millions of animals have been microchipped, and reported problems are few. Of these reactions, movement of the microchip from its original implantation site is the most common problem reported. Other problems, (failure of the microchip, hair loss, infection, swelling, and tumor formation) were reported in much lower numbers. With these infrequent problems, the benefits of microchipping animals definitely outweigh the risks.

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To remind pet owners to check and update their information, the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) and the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) have established August 15 as Check the Chip Day.

Take a few minutes to check your information and update it if necessary, and you can rest easy that you've improved your chances of getting your pet back if he or she is lost or stolen.

For more information, visit:

avma.org

American Animal Hospital Association

aahanet.org



www.avma.org | 800.248.2862

MICROCHIPPING YOUR PET

Brought to you by your veterinarian and the American Veterinary Medical Association



A MICROCHIP IS A SMALL, ELECTRONIC CHIP

enclosed in a glass cylinder that is about the same size as a grain of rice. The microchip itself does not have a battery—it is activated by a scanner that is passed over the area, and the radiowaves put out by the scanner activate the chip. The chip transmits the identification number to the scanner, which displays the number on the screen.

WHY SHOULD I HAVE MY PETS MICROCHIPPED?

The best reason to have your pets microchipped is the improved chance that you'll get your pet back if it becomes lost or stolen.

WILL A MICROCHIP REALLY MAKE IT MORE LIKELY FOR ME TO GET MY PET BACK IF IT IS LOST?

Definitely! Dogs with microchips are more than twice as likely to be returned to their owners, and microchipped cats are almost 20 times as likely to be reunited with their families. The most common reason microchips fail to reunite pets and families is incorrect owner information (or no owner information) in the microchip registry database – so don't forget to register and keep your information updated. When your pet is microchipped, you'll be provided with information on registering the microchip and updating your information.

HOW IS A MICROCHIP IMPLANTED INTO AN ANIMAL?

It is injected under the skin using a hypodermic needle. It is no more painful than a typical injection,



although the needle is slightly larger than those used for injection. No surgery or anesthesia is required—a microchip can be implanted during a routine veterinary office visit. Microchips should be implanted under supervision by a veterinarian, because veterinarians know where the microchips should be placed, how to place them, and how to recognize the signs of a problem and treat one if it occurs.

ONCE THE MICROCHIP HAS BEEN IMPLANTED, IS THERE ANY SORT OF MAINTENANCE NEEDED?

There really is no maintenance required for microchips themselves, although you do need to register the microchip and keep your contact information up-to-date in the microchip registration database. If you notice any abnormalities at the site where the microchip was implanted, such as drainage (oozing) or swelling, contact your veterinarian. Ideally, the microchip should be scanned during your animal's regular check-ups to make sure that it's still in place and working properly.

Any database with which you register your pet's microchip needs to be regularly updated, and the critical database to keep up-to-date is the one maintained by the microchip manufacturer. If you've moved, or if any of your information

(especially your phone number) has changed, make sure you update your microchip registration in the manufacturer's database as soon as possible.

Once your pet is microchipped, there are only three things you need to do:

- 1. Make sure the microchip is registered**
- 2. Ask your veterinarian to scan your pet's microchip at least once per year to make sure the microchip is still functioning and can be detected**
- 3. Keep your registration information up-to-date**