

Microchipping Your Pet

By Jenna Lenarz

A microchip ID is a small transmitter about the size of a grain of rice. When a scanner passes over it, a signal is emitted indicating the unique identification number of the chip. This tiny but sturdy little implant can reunite you with a lost pet, serve as proof of ownership in a dispute, or even mean the difference between euthanasia and medical care in an emergency.

Microchip Implantation: Basically a Shot With a Big Needle

The microchip ID is small enough to pass through a fairly large needle made for this purpose. Microchips are generally shipped in an individually packaged syringe made for chip implantation. Chips can be implanted in newborn animals to assist in telling them apart. Some people like to wait until the pet is being spayed or neutered so as to be anesthetized for the rather large needle but waiting runs the risk of the pet escaping unidentified so it is a good idea to implant the chip as soon as possible. *A common misconception is that the chip implantation requires surgery. In fact, a chip can be implanted in a matter of seconds while you wait.*

What Information is Encoded on the Chip?

Only the unique identification number is encoded on the chip. None of your personal information is on the chip. The chip number is similar to a vehicle identification number on a car. It is registered in a central registry just as a car is registered and it is the central registry that has your personal information.

Can a Microchip be Used to Locate a Lost Pet?

No. A microchip is not a location device. At the present time, GPS collars are available but their use is limited by the fact that a collar can be removed or can come off. *A microchip is an identification device, not a locator.*