



## NATIONAL CHECK THE CHIP DAY

is celebrated every year on August 15 to help pet owners remember to check and update the contact information associated with their pets' microchips.

If your pet has already been microchipped, take a few minutes now to check the contact information in the microchip registry database, and set a reminder to check it every year on August 15. Once you know it's up to date, you then can rest easy knowing you've improved your pet's chance of returning home if they ever become lost.

If your pet hasn't yet been microchipped, consider this **easy and effective** way to protect you and your pet from heartbreak should you become separated.

### ARE THERE PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH MICROCHIPS? HOW COMMON ARE THEY?

Millions of animals have been microchipped, and reported problems are rare. The most common problem is movement of the microchip away from its original implantation site. If this happens, the microchip is usually still detectable with the scanner, but not always. That's one reason it's important to have your veterinarian scan the chip regularly. Other rare problems include microchip failure, hair loss, infection, swelling, chronic inflammation, and tumor formation. With these problems being so uncommon, the benefits of microchipping animals definitely outweigh the risks.



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American Veterinary Medical Association  
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# MICROCHIPPING YOUR PET

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



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A pet's microchip is a tiny, electronic chip enclosed in a cylinder that is about the size of a grain of rice. The microchip contains a unique identification number that, when registered, matches up with the owner's contact information. The contact information is maintained in an online microchip registry database.

### HOW IS A MICROCHIP IMPLANTED?

A microchip is implanted under your pet's skin using a hypodermic needle. This process is no more painful than a vaccination or other shot, although the needle is slightly larger. No surgery or anesthesia is needed—the microchip can be implanted during a routine veterinary visit. It's important that this be done under a veterinarian's supervision because veterinarians know the best place to implant the microchip, and how to recognize and treat a problem in the rare chance that a problem occurs.

### HOW DOES THE MICROCHIP WORK?

Your pet's microchip contains four components: a capacitor, antenna, connecting wire, and covering. There is no battery or other power source. When a scanner is passed over the area where the microchip was implanted, the low-power radiofrequency signal put out by the scanner activates the chip. The chip then transmits its unique identification number to the scanner, and the scanner displays the number on the screen.

The microchip is not a GPS device and cannot track your pet's location, even if the pet becomes lost or stolen.



## Remember to register your pet's microchip, and keep your contact information up to date.

### WHAT KIND OF INFORMATION IS CONTAINED IN THE MICROCHIP?

A pet microchip contains only a unique identification number. It does not contain your pet's name or address. To connect the chip's identification number to your pet's address—and you—you must first register the number in the microchip registry database and enter your contact information. A microchip also does not contain your pet's medical information, although some microchip registry databases will allow you to enter that information if you choose.

### WHY SHOULD I HAVE MY PETS MICROCHIPPED?

Microchips provide a reliable method of permanent, tamper-proof identification that can help get your pet back home to you if you are separated for any reason.

Importantly, most animal care and control offices, animal shelters, and veterinary hospitals have scanners that can read pet microchips. This means that if your pet becomes lost or stolen, a properly registered microchip greatly improves your pet's chance of returning home. In fact, research shows that microchipped animals are far more likely to be returned to their owners.

Another reason to microchip your pet is that the microchip implantation method is less painful than the alternative for permanent identification—tattoos.

### DOES A MICROCHIP REPLACE IDENTIFICATION AND RABIES TAGS?

No. When it comes to quickly identifying a found pet, or showing the pet has been vaccinated against rabies, nothing replaces a collar with up-to-date identification and rabies tags. Still, if your pet isn't wearing a collar and tags, or if the collar comes off, then a microchip might be the only way to reunite the two of you.

### ONCE THE MICROCHIP HAS BEEN IMPLANTED, WHAT DO I DO? IS ANY MAINTENANCE NEEDED?

The microchip itself does not need maintenance. However, there are three things you will need to do to make sure the microchip does its job:

1. **Register the microchip** in the microchip registry database, and provide your current contact information.
2. **Update your contact information** in the database as soon as possible whenever you move or change phone numbers.
3. At least once a year, ask your veterinarian to **scan the chip** to make sure the microchip is still detectable and working properly. You can do this at a routine veterinary checkup,

You'll receive instructions on how to register the microchip when your pet receives it. The most important database to register with and keep up to date is the one maintained by the microchip manufacturer. This is the database that animal shelters and veterinarians will search if your pet is found.

Remember: even with a microchip, your pet is less likely to be returned to you if your phone number in the database is missing, incorrect, or disconnected.

### ONCE YOUR PET IS MICROCHIPPED, THERE ARE ONLY THREE THINGS YOU NEED TO DO:

1. **Register the microchip.**
2. **Keep your registration information up to date.**
3. **Ask your veterinarian to scan the microchip at least once a year to make sure it is still working properly.**