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Why Should I Microchip my Pet? Is it REALLY Necessary?

Losing your pet can be a traumatic and even tragic event. Conscientious pet guardians protect their pets with collars and ID tags. Unfortunately, collars and ID tags are not foolproof and dogs and cats can still get lost. Collars can break or fall-off, leaving your beloved pet among the countless, unidentified lost strays at animal shelters. The true tragedy is the fact it can easily be prevented with the use of microchips.

What are microchips?



Microchips are implantable computer chips that encode a unique identification number to help reunite you with your lost pet. They are no bigger than a grain of rice and they are placed under your pet's skin with a needle and syringe, not much differently than a routine vaccine. Unlike collars and ID tags, they can never break or fall-off. They work by receiving a radio signal from a scanner and transmitting the encoded chip identification number back to the scanner. With the chip identification number in hand, the vital contact information is only a phone call away.

What are the Statistics?

- Missing pets rarely ever make it home again and the longer they are missing; the lower their chances of returning.
- The American Humane Association estimates over 10 million dogs & cats are lost or stolen in the U.S. every year.
- One in three pets will become lost at some point during their life.

A study published in the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association, including 53 animal shelters across the U.S., confirmed the high rate of return of microchipped dogs and cats to their families, and the importance of microchip registration. From the study:

- Only about 22 percent of lost dogs that entered the animal shelters were reunited with their families. However, the return-to-owner rate for microchipped dogs was over 52 percent (a 238 percent increase).
- Less than 2 percent of lost cats that entered the animal shelters were reunited with their families. The return-to-owner rate for microchipped cats was dramatically higher at over 38 percent (more than 2000 percent better).
- Only 58 percent of the microchipped animals' microchips had been registered in a database with their pet parent's contact information.

Veterinarians encourage microchipping

And with good reason—microchipping substantially increases the likelihood of a pet returning home by offering secure, reliable, unique and permanent identification. Hopefully your pet will never get lost, but in case it happens, by making sure your pet has a microchip, you are giving yourself and your pet the best chance of a speedy, happy reunion. Just ask Spice, the 6-month-old grey and white cat discovered 2,300 miles away from her home. Thanks to her microchip, the shelter in Westbrook, Maine was able to identify her guardian in Albuquerque, New Mexico.