

Microchips...Prepare For The Unexpected!

Microchipping pets has become part of routine pet care just like spaying/neutering and regular vaccinations. It's estimated that over 12 million animals in the US have been microchipped. Microchips are implanted using a hypodermic needle during a regular exam or surgery. A microchip is about the size of a grain of rice and is implanted subcutaneously (between the skin and muscle layers) usually between the shoulder blades. These microchips use radio frequency identification (RFID) technology to store and transmit information. That means that they don't use a battery or an internal power source, they remain dormant until they are scanned by a microchip reader. Each microchip is assigned an individual number that appears on the reader when it is scanned allowing the animal's owner to be identified.

Microchips play a vital role in reuniting animals with their people. One of the most inexpensive ways to identify your pet is a collar with up to date ID tags, however collars do break, and tags do fall off. Microchips are permanent and unalterable. It is standard procedure for shelters and veterinary clinics to scan incoming strays for microchips. Here at SVAH we regularly scan dogs and cats picked up by Good Samaritans and with their help we have been able to contact owners and reunite them with their pets. Some people view microchips as an unnecessary expense (microchips typically cost around \$50) but that expense pales in comparison with the risk of never having your pet returned.

By Danielle Regier, Veterinary Receptionist