

Pet Identification

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Why should my Pet have identification?

No one expects to ever be separated from their pet but the hundreds of thousands of pets taken to animal shelters each year are proof that it does happen. Many of these animals have no form of traceable identification and are never reunited with their owners.

A high percentage of pets that are separated from their owners are not wearing tags or even a collar when they are found. In some cases, this is because the collar and/or tags were left off intentionally thinking the pet was secured in a house or yard.

Unfortunately, even indoor pets manage to find their way out of the house sometimes. Therefore, your pet should *always* have identification. The rabies tag that is issued by your veterinary office, a tag with your phone number (including area code), and your annual municipal license tag are forms of identification that should be present on all pets. The most significant problem with tags and collars is that they can be easily removed or lost and therefore, provide no guarantee that they will remain with your pet. Permanent identification is therefore the most effective way to be sure that your pet will be returned to you when it is found.

What kinds of permanent Pet identification are available?

Tattoos are a common and permanent source of pet identification. The tattoo is placed in the right ear of the pet so that it is visible and can never be lost or stolen. Tattoos can only be done when your pet is under a general anaesthetic (ideally when he or she is being spayed or neutered.) The tattoo is a combination of numbers and letters that is specific to your pet. This way the tattoo can be traced directly to you when your pet is found.

Microchips are another effective method of permanently identifying your pet. A microchip is a small coded device (approximately the size of a grain of rice) that is implanted under the loose skin between the pet's shoulder blades. The microchip is implanted virtually painlessly by the use of a special syringe. The method is very similar to your pet getting an annual vaccination. A microchip is implanted once during your pet's lifetime and does not wear out and cannot be lost or stolen.

Animal shelters and veterinary offices throughout North America are equipped with special scanners that can detect microchips. If a chip is detected, a number will appear on the scanner. This identification number, along with your name, address and phone number are on file with the microchip company so that you can be contacted quickly when your pet is found.

Using more than one of these pet identification systems will help to ensure that your pet will never truly be lost. However, it is important to update your information when you move, or if you change your phone number, to help your pet find his or her way home.

Make sure to keep a record of all your pets' tattoo, microchip, license, and rabies tag numbers. If you do not have this information at hand you may be unable to properly recite the information to an animal shelter if your pet does go missing.

Identification for your pet is just as important as excellent health care. For your pet's safety we offer ear tattoos, microchips, and personalized ID tags. Please call any of our three pet hospitals for more information about any of these products.

The time to begin thinking about pet identification is now. Once your pet is lost it is too late!