



**By Dr. Maria Krenz, DVM – The Zimmerman Veterinary Clinic 763-856-4848**

## **Microchipping-Bringing Lost Pets Home**

One in three pets will become lost during their lifetime. Of these lost pets, 17% of dogs and 2% of cats will return home. Nearly 4 million pets are euthanized every year in shelters because their owners cannot find them in time.

### **Why should I microchip my pet?**

You may think your pet is safe from getting lost. Even indoor cats can escape, if a door or window is accidentally left open. Occasionally, accidents are out of owner's control such as when natural disasters occur. Collars and tags are a great start to identification, but can be lost when a pet is roaming or it may become illegible. Even though you may think your pet is easy to identify, a shelter may have a hard time picking out your pet based on a verbal description.

### **What is a microchip?**

A microchip is a tiny chip about the size of a rice grain. It is injected under the skin usually between a pet's shoulder blades. It is similar to giving a vaccination and most pets do not reject to the placement. A topical anesthetic can be used to minimize any discomfort. The chip remains inactive until it is read by a scanner and then it emits a low radio frequency that is read by the scanner as a unique ID code. This ID code is as unique as a fingerprint. Microchips last the lifetime of the pet. Microchips are not 'GPS' systems and can only be read by a scanner that most veterinary hospitals and animal shelters carry.

### **Are there different microchips available?**

There are three main brands of pet microchips. Each service offers slightly different plans and services, but accomplishes the same goal of permanently identifying your pet. Some plans even provide lost pet insurance at a minimal annual charge along with sending out flyers to local shelters and veterinary clinics, if your pet gets lost. When purchasing a microchip make sure to ask about all services; some are free and some may require additional payment, or annual fees.

### **How much do microchips cost?**

The price of the microchip varies. Most chips are very reasonably priced, considering the chip lasts the entire lifetime of your pet. Having a chip can increase the chances of finding your pet sooner, which can minimize impound costs and increase your chances of returning your pet home, safely.

### **Where do I get my pet microchipped?**

A licensed veterinarian can provide you counseling on the type of implant available for your pet. A veterinary clinic will also be able to implant your pet with a microchip.

Disclaimer: This written content is meant to be educational and is not medical advice. Always consult a veterinarian about medical advice for your pet.