

MICROCHIPPING

DID YOU KNOW THAT EVERY 2 SECONDS a family pet goes missing in the United States? Tragically many never return home due to lack of identification. A microchip along with a collar and tag are the best ways to ensure you will be reunited with your pet if they go missing.

WHAT IS A MICROCHIP AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

A microchip is a non-removable form of identification. It is about the size of a grain of rice that contains a personal identification number that stays with your pet for its lifetime. The chip is inserted underneath the skin between the shoulder blades and is a safe and easy procedure. It is a quick procedure as well; it takes the same amount of time to place a microchip as it does to administer a vaccination. The needle that inserts the chip under the skin is a little bigger than a normal vaccination needle so there can be a little discomfort when administering it but a lot of pets don't even react to it and they only have to do it once, remember the microchip last the length of your pet's life.

A microchip is not a GPS tracking device. You cannot track down your pet's location from a microchip. A microchip is similar to a barcode at a grocery store that you can scan. When a pet is scanned a series of numbers and possibly letters will show up that are unique to your animal. When your pet is found and taken to a veterinary clinic or animal shelter the staff there will have a handheld scanner that can read the number specific to your animal and will contact the microchip company that has your information on file. From there either the microchip company or the shelter or clinic you are at will contact you directly. Keep in mind, the microchip is only as good as the information associated with it. Make sure that if you ever move or change your phone number you contact the company the microchip came from and have your information updated. This is a very simple process and can be done either online or over the phone depending on the company.

WHY MICROCHIP, CAN'T I JUST KEEP A COLLAR AND TAG ON MY PET?

We suggest that you do keep a collar and tag on your pet as well as getting a microchip. Often times collars fall off or break and tags can get snagged or pulled off especially during the great escape. It is always a good idea to have a back up form of identification that will still be with your pet even if a collar or tags have been lost.

DID YOU KNOW THAT A MICROCHIP IS REQUIRED FOR DOGS AND CATS WHO LIVE IN THE CITY LIMITS OF ALPINE?

The ordinance states:

Sec. 10-46. - Dogs and cats to be vaccinated; microchipped

(b) Dog and cat microchipping required.

- (1) All cats and dogs living within the city limits of Alpine are required to have a microchip.
- (2) The owner or keeper of any dog or cat must have the animal implanted with a registered microchip before the animal attains six months of age. Animals exempt from microchipping include:
 - a. An animal that is determined to be medically unsuitable for microchipping by a licensed veterinarian in writing.
 - b. A dog or cat owner that is a nonresident of this city and is keeping the subject pet in the city for fewer than 60 days;
- (3) All animals who enter the shelter whether stray or surrendered will be microchipped prior to return to owner or adoption. A fee will be included in the impound fee or adoption fee to cover the cost of the microchip. The microchip will be registered under the owners name and administered by the animal services officer.
- (4) Maintaining current microchip registration.
 - a. The owner or keeper of a dog or cat shall maintain current registration with a microchip registration company.
 - b. If there is a change in contact information of an owner or keeper of a registered microchipped dog or cat, the owner or keeper shall update correct information, including new address or telephone number, with the microchip registration company within 30 days of the change in contact information.
 - c. If there is a change in ownership of the registered dog or cat, the initial owner or keeper shall be responsible for ensuring that the microchip is no longer registered in the initial owner's or keeper's name within 30 days of the change in ownership. The new owner or keeper shall be responsible for re-registering the microchip to include any new address and telephone number and have the registration information transferred to the new owner's or keeper's name within 30 days after the change in ownership.

WHERE CAN I GET MY PET MICROCHIPPED?

You may either have your animal microchipped by your veterinarian or you can have your pet microchipped for \$15 at the Alpine Animal Services Shelter.

Please call ahead of time, 432-837-9030, to schedule an appointment to have it done Monday-Friday 10am-1pm or 2-6pm.

