

POINTS TO PAWNDER SERIES

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Pet Identification – It Could Save Your Pet’s Life!

According to Animal Hospital Association’s 2003 Pet Owner Survey, 30% of pet owners have lost their pet at some point. Millions of these lost pets enter the already over-burdened animal shelter system each year. And the reality is that, without identification, shelters are left with no choice but to euthanize many of them. By spending just a few minutes of your time, and about the amount of money you’d spend on lunch out, you can make sure this never happens to your pet.

Simple Two-Step Approach To Pet Identification

STEP 1: Buy A Personalized Identification Tag



- In addition to rabies and license tags, **all pets should wear a personalized tag on their collar** that contains their name and their owner’s name and phone number. You can create a personalized tag in under five minutes and for just a few dollars at nearly any pet store, including PETCO and PETSMART.
- **Even if your pet has a microchip, he/she should STILL wear a personalized identification tag on his/her collar**, because some shelters don’t have the equipment to scan for a microchip, or have equipment that’s incompatible with your pet’s chip, and thus, your pet’s chip alone may not be enough to save their life.

STEP 2: Microchip Your Pet

- This is a safe, permanent identification system where a chip about the size of a grain of rice is inserted via hypodermic needle under your pet’s skin. The procedure is virtually painless to your pet and can typically be performed by your veterinarian or local animal shelter for \$10.00 to \$50.00.
- When they receive lost pets, most shelters pass a scanner over their body to determine if they have a microchip. If one is identified, a number will show on the scanner, and the contact information for the pet’s owner is quickly accessed via a central computer database that’s available 7 days a week, 24 hours a day.
- Once the chip is inserted, you must register it (along with your contact information) in a national database. **This system is ONLY effective if you update your address and phone number with the database any time you move – otherwise, your pet’s microchip is worthless.**
- Indiana-PAW recommends that you have your veterinarian scan your pet’s microchip annually, to be sure it hasn’t migrated and can still be easily detected.

Suggested Reading

- Humane Society of the United States, “Identifying Lost Pets”
http://www.hsus.org/press_and_publications/humane_society_magazines_and_newsletters/all_animals/volume_7_issue_1_winter_2005/high_technology_identifying_lost_pets.html

Important Note: Indiana-PAW’s POINTS TO PAWNDER SERIES is intended to provide quick tips to help citizens address common pet health and behavior questions. It is not intended to replace consultation with one’s veterinarian and/or a trained behavior specialist.