

Microchipping of Animals FAQ

www.getmeknown.co.za

Q: What is a microchip?

A: A microchip is a small, electronic chip enclosed in a glass cylinder that is about the same size as a grain of rice. The microchip itself does not have a battery—it is activated by a scanner that is passed over the area, and the radiowaves put out by the scanner activate the chip. The chip transmits the identification number to the scanner, which displays the number on the screen. The microchip itself is also called a transponder.

Q: How is a microchip implanted into an animal? Is it painful? Does it require surgery or anesthesia?

A: It is injected under the skin using a hypodermic needle. It is no more painful than a typical injection, although the needle is slightly larger than those used for injection. No surgery or anesthesia is required. . If your pet is already under anesthesia for a procedure, such as neutering or spaying, the microchip can often be implanted while they're still under anesthesia.

Q: What kind of information is contained in the microchip? Is there a tracking device in it? Will it store my pet's medical information?

A: The microchips presently used in pets only contain identification numbers. No, the microchip is not a GPS device and cannot track your animal if it gets lost. Although the present technology microchip itself does not contain your pet's medical information, our GetMeKnown.co.za microchip registration databases will allow you to store that information in the database for quick reference.

Q: What do they mean by "microchip frequency?"

A: The frequency of a microchip actually refers to the frequency of the radiowave given off by the scanner that activates and reads the microchip. Examples of microchip frequencies used in the U.S. include 125 kiloHertz (kHz), 128 kHz, and 134.2 kHz.

Q: I've heard about something called "ISO standard." What does that mean?

A: The International Standards Organization, or ISO, has approved and recommended a global standard for microchips. The global standard is intended to create an identification system that is consistent worldwide. For example, if a dog was implanted with an ISO standard microchip in the U.S. travels to Europe with its owners and becomes lost, the ISO standard scanners in Europe would be able to read the dog's microchip. If the dog was implanted with a non-ISO microchip and the ISO scanner was not forward- and backward-reading (universal), the dog's microchip might not be detected or be read by the scanner.

The ISO standard frequency is 134.2 kHz. (FDX-B 15 digit Microchips)

Q: What are universal (forward- and backward-reading) scanners? How do they differ from other scanners?

A: Forward-reading scanners only detect 134.2 kHz (ISO standard) microchips, but will not detect 125 kHz or 128 kHz (non-ISO standard – 10 digits) microchips. Universal scanners, also called forward- and backward-reading scanners, detect all microchip frequencies. The main advantage of the Lusahn universal scanners is the improved chances of detecting and reading a microchip, regardless of the frequency. It also eliminates the need for multiple scanners with multiple frequencies.

Q: How does a microchip help reunite a lost animal with its owner?

A: When an animal is found and taken to a shelter or veterinary clinic, one of the first things they do is scan the animal for a microchip. If they find a microchip, and if the microchip registry has accurate information, they can quickly find the animal's owner.

Q: Will a microchip really make it more likely for me to get my pet back if it is lost?

A: Definitely! A study of more than 7,700 stray animals at animal shelters showed that dogs without microchips were returned to their owners 21.9% of the time, whereas microchipped dogs were returned to their owners 52.2% of the time. Cats without microchips were reunited with their owners only 1.8% of the time, whereas microchipped cats went back home 38.5% of the time. (Lord et al, *JAVMA*, July 15, 2009). For microchipped animals that weren't returned to their owners, most of the time it was due to incorrect owner information (or no owner information) in the microchip registry database – so don't forget to register and keep your information updated.

Q: Does a microchip replace identification tags and rabies tags?

A: Absolutely not. Microchips are great for permanent identification that is tamper-proof, but nothing replaces a collar with up-to-date identification tags. If a pet is wearing a collar with tags when it's lost, it's often a very quick process to read the tag and contact the owner; however, the information on the tags needs to be accurate and up-to-date. But if a pet is not wearing a collar and tags, or if the collar is lost or removed, then the presence of a microchip might be the only way the pet's owner can be found.

Q: I just adopted a pet from the animal shelter. Is it microchipped? How can I find out?

A: If the shelter scanned the animal, they should be able to tell you if it is microchipped. Some shelters implant microchips into every animal they adopt out, so check with the shelter and find out your new pet's microchip number so you can get it registered in your name.

Most veterinary clinics have microchip scanners, and your veterinarian can scan your new pet for a microchip when you take your new pet for its veterinary checkup. Microchips show up on radiographs (x-rays), so that's another way to look for one.

Q: Why should I have my animals microchipped?

A: The best reason to have your animals microchipped is the improved chance that you'll get your animal back if it becomes lost or stolen.

Q: Why can't I just buy the microchip and implant it myself?

A: It looks like a simple-enough procedure to implant a microchip and yes you may !!!

Q: Once the microchip has been implanted, what do I do? Is there any sort of maintenance needed?

A: There really is no maintenance required for microchips themselves, although you do need to register the microchip and keep your contact information up-to-date in the microchip registration database. If you notice any abnormalities at the site where the microchip was implanted, such as drainage (oozing) or swelling, contact your veterinarian. Ideally, the microchip should be scanned during your animal's regular wellness/preventive care exams to make sure that it's still in place and working as it should.

Q: I heard about a dog that was euthanized by a shelter because his microchip wasn't detected by the shelter's scanner. How can I know that won't happen to my pet?

A: Unfortunately, there have been instances where a pet's microchip was not detected by the animal shelter's scanner, and the pet was euthanized after the usual holding period because they could not locate its owner. Although these are heartbreaking circumstances, the good news is that this is now unlikely to happen because of the availability of our universal (forward-and-backward reading) scanners.

Although the presence of a microchip is not a 100% guarantee that you will get your pet back if it's lost or stolen, it does dramatically increase the chances you will be reunited with your pet...as long as you keep the registration information up to date.

Q: Why are microchips sometimes not found?

A: As with almost anything, it's not a fool proof system. Although it's very rare, microchips can fail and become unable to be detected by a scanner. Problems with the scanners are also not common, but can occur. Human error, such as improper scanning technique or incomplete scanning of an animal, can also lead to failure to detect a microchip.

Some of the animal-related factors that can make it difficult to detect a microchip include the following: animals that won't stay still or struggle too much while being scanned; the presence of long, matted hair at or near the microchip implantation site; excessive fat deposits in the region of implantation; and a metal collar (or a collar with a lot of metal on it). All of these can interfere with the scanning and detection of the microchip.

Q: My pet has two different frequency microchips implanted. Do I need to have one removed? Will they interfere with each other? Which microchip will be detected by the scanner?

A: No, you do not need to have one of the microchips removed and no, they will not interfere with each other. The microchip detected by the scanner will depend on the scanner used – if it is a universal (forward- and backward-reading) scanner, it will probably detect each chip as it is passed over it. To detect the other chip, the scanner has to be reset and passed over the area where it is located. If it is a scanner that only reads one microchip frequency, it will only detect a microchip of that specific frequency and will not detect or read the other microchip.

If you know your pet has more than one microchip implanted, make sure you keep the database information updated for each microchip. People don't routinely assume there's more than one microchip (because it is very uncommon), so they will try to find the owner based on the registry number of the microchip they detect.

Q: My pet has a non-ISO standard, 125 kHz microchip implanted, and I want to have it implanted with an ISO standard, 134 kHz microchip. Can I do that?

A: Sure you can. Both chips will function normally. If your pet is scanned with a scanner that only reads 125 kHz chips, only the 125 kHz chip will be detected. If your pet is scanned with a universal (forward- and backward-reading) scanner, it could detect one or both chips separately (see the question above this one for more information).

Q: I'm relocating to a country that requires ISO chips, and my pet does not have an ISO chip or doesn't have a microchip at all. What do I need to do?

A: Your pet will need to be implanted with an ISO microchip before it will be allowed into that country. But that's not the only thing you need to know: countries differ widely on their importation rules, including different regulations about required vaccinations and quarantine periods once the animal enters that country. If you do some research and preparation, your pet's relocation can go smoothly. Contact the country of origin to determine their requirements regarding microchips as well as vaccinations, certificates, etc. Alternatively, you can contact an experienced animal shipper who is well-versed in the processes and regulations affecting animal shipment.

Q: I'm relocating to a country that requires ISO chips, and my pet has an ISO chip. What do I need to do?

A: In general, your pet won't need another microchip to be allowed into that country; however, you should check on the destination country's animal importation regulations as you plan your relocation. That's not the only thing you need to know: countries differ widely on their importation rules, including different regulations about required vaccinations and quarantine periods once the animal enters that country. If you do some research and preparation, your pet's relocation can go smoothly. Contact the country of origin to determine their requirements regarding microchips as well as vaccinations, certificates, etc. Alternatively, you can contact an experienced animal shipper who is well-versed in the processes and regulations affecting animal shipment.

Q: Why isn't it a requirement that all shelters and veterinary clinics use the same microchips and readers? Or, if there are different frequencies of microchips and each requires a separate scanner, why aren't they required to have one of each scanner so microchips are never missed?

A: There is regulation of microchip standards and different manufacturers are able to produce and patent different microchip technologies with different frequencies. Because of market competition, animal shelters and veterinary clinics are able to choose from several microchip manufacturers and scanners. Microchip scanners are relatively expensive, and it is often cost prohibitive keep one or more of each type of microchip scanner.

This problem can be solved by the use of our universal microchip scanners, which are readily available. The use of ISO standard microchips would be a good step in developing a consistent microchipping system.

Q: When I have my pet microchipped, is there one central database that registers the information and makes it available to animal shelters and veterinary clinics in case my pet is lost or stolen?

A: At this time, there is not a central database for registering microchips; each manufacturer maintains its own database (or has it managed by someone else). HetMeknown is well known with 150000+ recorded Microchip numbers.

Fortunately, microchip scanners display the starting code linked to database of the microchip's manufacturer when the microchip is read. Therefore, the likelihood that an animal cannot be identified from its microchip number is very low—that is, unless your pet's microchip has not been registered or the information is not accurate. Our starting code is 900025XXXX.

Q: What should I do to "maintain" my pet's microchip?

A: Once your pet is microchipped, there are only three things you need to do: 1) make sure the microchip is registered; 2) ask your veterinarian to scan your pet's microchip at least once per year to make sure the microchip is still functioning and can be detected; and 3) keep your registration information up-to-date.

If you've moved, or if any of your information (especially your phone number) has changed, make sure you update your microchip registration in the manufacturer's database as soon as possible.

Hope this information was worth the read

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