

## Popular Article

# Microchipping For Pet Dogs

**Dr Sumanth Bedre M**

Senior Taskforce Veterinary Surgeon at Worldwide Veterinary Service (WVS) India

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6990883>

Few months ago, I came across the story of a dog named 'Alaska' reuniting with his owner after being lost for six years at Tucson, Arizona. I was so surprised to know that microchips helped several such pet parents to be reunited with their lost pets. When I started reading more about microchips, I strongly felt that there is a need to make more pet owners aware of this existing technology.

The dog is man's best friend - one that may have an urge to wander, explore and runs the risk of getting lost. Unfortunately, it is not too uncommon for dogs to lose their way back home and end up in shelters. A staggering number of dogs are lost in shelters each year because there is a lack of reliable means for identification once they are found. If your pet is lost, you are far more likely to be reunited if they are microchipped.

### What is a microchip?

A microchip is a small, electronic chip enclosed in a glass cylinder that is about the same size as a grain of rice. Once the microchip is implanted under the skin, it will remain for the entirety of your dog's lifetime. The chip contains a unique 15-digit number for identification, similar to Aadhaar number for individuals. When scanned, the chip transmits its identification number using passive RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) technology on to the scanner, which displays the number on a screen.

The International Standards Organization (ISO) has approved and recommended a global standard for microchips that ensures a consistent identification system worldwide. The ISO standard frequency is 134.2 kHz. Also, contrary to popular belief, the microchip is not a GPS device and cannot track your animal if it gets lost. The chip is RFID which enables it to be read by a microchip scanner, but only once your pet has been found.

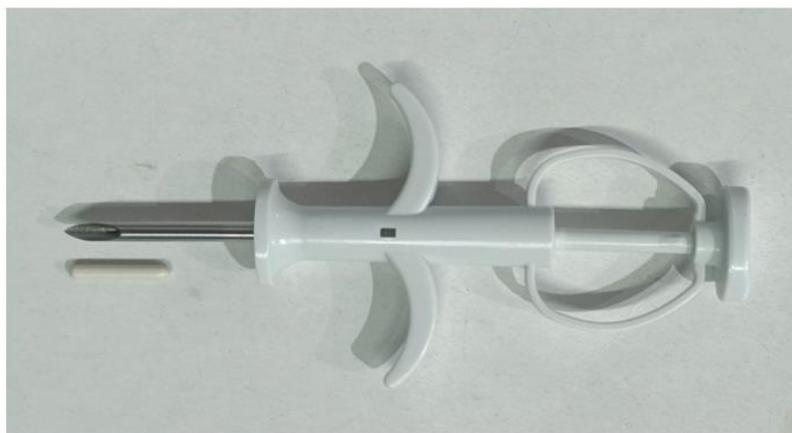


Fig 1. Microchip with the inject applicator

## Procedure

It is a 2-step process wherein which chip is implanted and then the unique identification number is registered along with all the relevant details about the owner and the pet. Microchip comes pre-loaded in a sterile inject applicator. The chip is injected subcutaneously (just under the skin) between the shoulder blades using a hypodermic needle at the back of your pet's neck by a registered veterinarian. It is no more painful than a typical injection, although the needle is slightly larger than those used for injection. No surgery or anaesthesia is required and the microchip can be implanted during any regular vet check-ups. Make sure to read the chip right after injection using a microchip scanner. Also, ask your veterinarian to scan your pet's microchip at least once every year to make sure it is still detected. Having a microchip placed is only the first step, and the microchip must be registered in a central database and keep your registration information in the database up-to-date.



Fig 2. Implanting the microchip



Fig 3. Scanning the microchip

## Why Microchip your pets?

- 1. Unique Identity.** The microchip acts as the unique identification of your pet. The chip stores only a 15-digit unique number. This number is mentioned on all the records for the pet. Most pets wear collar tags imprinted with their name and the phone number of their owner, but only a microchip provides permanent ID that cannot fall off or be removed.
- 2. Find lost pets.** If your pet is lost, you are far more likely to be reunited if they are microchipped as they can be scanned at nearest vets and the owner details can be obtained

from the database. 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.

3. **Travel.** Microchipping is mandatory for international travel and recommended for travel within India. All pet documents must have microchip number.
4. **Pet insurance.** Microchipping is mandatory for buying pet insurance.
5. **Pet registration.** Every dog registered with KCI (Kennel Club of India) must compulsorily be microchipped.

As per The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Dog Breeding and Marketing Rules), 2017 and The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Pet Shop) Rules, 2018, no puppy can be sold by a breeder without a microchip. Also, microchipping can be one of the most effective ways to solve the cases of theft, abandonment and illegal pet trafficking.

## Conclusion

A microchip is non-bio reactive and hence, biologically safe for the pet. It is a one-time investment with several benefits. The concept of microchipping for pet safety is not new, but pet owners in India are slowly becoming aware of it and the microchipping of pet dogs will be made compulsory in the days to come. Microchipping is also recommended for pet cats.

## References

1. <https://petchipindia.org/>
2. <https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/pet-owners/petcare/microchips-reunite-pets-families/microchipping-faq>
3. <https://www.kgun9.com/news/local-news/missing-dog-reunited-with-owner-after-six-years>
4. Lord, Linda K., et al. "Characterization of animals with microchips entering animal shelters". *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association* 235.2 (2009): 160-167.
5. The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Dog Breeding and Marketing) Rules, 2017.
6. The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Pet Shop) Rules, 2018.



I'm **Dr Sumanth Bedre M.**, currently working as a Senior Taskforce Veterinary Surgeon at Worldwide Veterinary Service (WVS) India. I have four years of experience in small animal and equine practice. I graduated in the year 2016 and have completed my masters in the year 2018. I have a keen interest in emergency and critical care medicine. I'm passionate about wildlife conservation and animal welfare.