



FACT SHEET

Miami Valley Animal Hospital, Inc.
1550 E David Rd
Kettering, OH 45429

(937)-434-VETS (8387)

www.mvahinc.com

Recently there has been strong interest in the use of an implanted “microchip”, with a specific numeric code, as a means of identifying lost pets. These microchips are about the size of a grain of rice, and can be injected into the tissue just under the skin (by convention, in the area between the shoulder blades). The numeric code can be “read” by a specialized scanner passed over the implant. This number can then be traced to the pet’s owner by contacting the databank service that maintains the records of who owns the pet with that particular chip. While the technology has been readily available for several years, it was only after the manufacturers of the chips and the scanners agreed to allow the use of “universal” scanners (that could read any chip), that the practicality of using the microchips increased. The manufacturers also worked to provide the scanners to county animal shelters, nationwide, at no charge, so that they could use them to scan lost / stray animals for an imbedded microchip, if present. Equally important is the reliability and stability of the registration databanks that hold the owner and chip number information. After all, what’s the point of knowing that the animal has a microchip, knowing the number of the chip, but not having any way to connect that number to the name, address, and phone number of the owner?

Most of the technical issues of microchip implantation and identification have been adequately addressed, and we offer this service to our clients. We have chosen the “Home Again®” microchip system, which is distributed by the Schering Co., a well-established, stable, pharmaceutical company with a strong animal health division.

It is our understanding that virtually ALL the area shelters are now scanning incoming animals for microchips. Some of the shelters are also implanting the chips in animals prior to adoption. An animal with no collar or other external identification can be identified if it has an implanted microchip. Universal scanners can identify the brand of chip, and the identifying code it contains. The facilities that scan for chips also know where to call for the owner information linked to that chip.

If you would like to have your pet implanted with a microchip, it only takes a few minutes, and is inserted without the need for an anesthetic. It is inserted with a large bore needle into the tissue just under the skin, and can be done while the pet is here for some other visit. Many puppy or kitten owners choose to have the chip inserted while their pet is anesthetized for spay or neuter surgery. There is a one-time registration fee, and this information can be revised if an owner moves, or even if the pet is given away to a new home. Feel free to ask any staff member for a demonstration of how the microchip and scanner work.

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