

Microchipping Your Pets

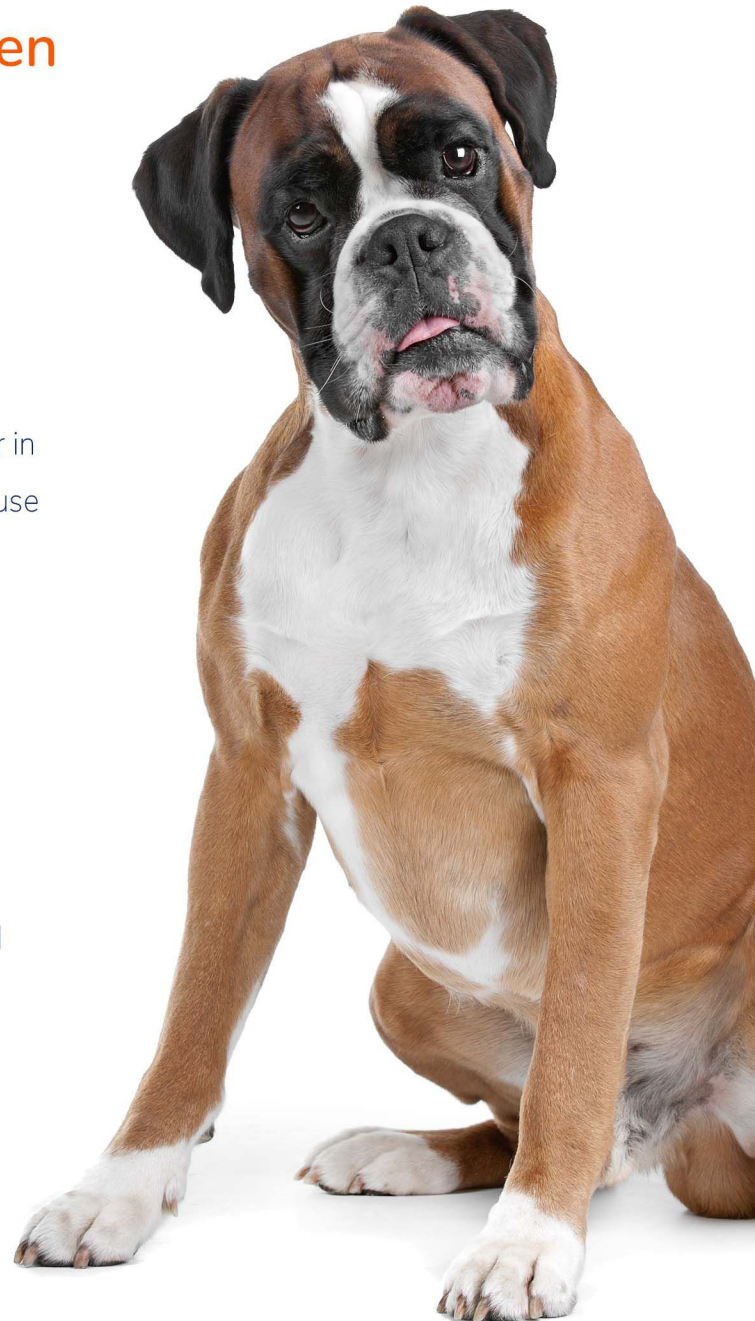
Who does not love stories with good endings, especially when a missing pet gets reunited with an owner?

One such case was the gorgeous 5-year-old Staffordshire Terrier, Zeus 'The Brave', who was reunited with his owner in 2019 after being missing for almost 20 months – all because of Zeus' microchip.

The Microchip

A microchip is a small, radio-frequency identification electronic chip enclosed in a glass cylinder of about the same size as a grain of rice. The microchip itself does not have a battery and is activated by a scanner that is passed over the area.

The radio waves emitted by the scanner activate the chip, which transmits the identification number to the scanner, displaying the number on the screen. This number links to the relevant information (contact details of the owner) in a database. It is, however, not a GPS device and cannot track your pet if it gets lost.



Unfortunately, and despite our best efforts, pets do sometimes go missing. Without proper identification, 90% of them might never return. A microchip gives you the best possible chance to be reunited with your pet, should it go missing.

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Insertion of a Microchip

A microchip is injected under the skin with 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 anaesthesia is required. If your pet is already under anaesthesia for a procedure, like neutering or spaying, the microchip can often be implanted during the procedure. Small pets can be safely microchipped at eight weeks of age.

Benefits of Microchipping

A study of more than 7700 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.

The main reason microchipped animals weren't returned to their owners was due to incorrect owner information (or no owner information) on the microchip registry database. It is crucial for pet owners to keep their information updated. Other benefits of microchips include the following:

- Microchips can be implanted into all animals, even fish, and birds.
- The microchip is small (12mm long and 3mm wide).
- The implant procedure takes seconds, is relatively painless, and lasts a pet's lifetime.
- Microchips are implanted by a subcutaneous injection in the scruff of your pet's neck.
- There is no need for an anaesthetic.
- Microchips are 100% tamper-proof.

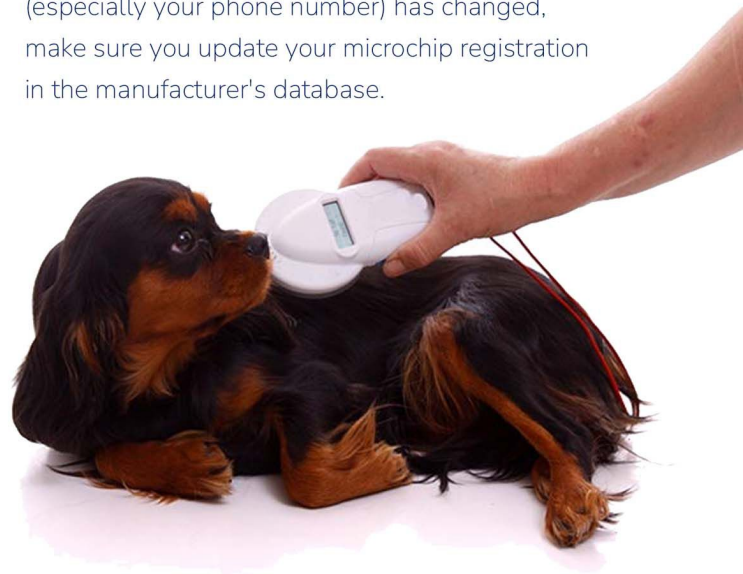
When Should Microchipping be Done?

Pets should get microchipped at their first vaccination at eight weeks of age. This is not only in case a puppy or kitten goes missing, but also in the event of emigration at a later stage. Several countries require ISO chips and that all vaccinations be done post the implant of the microchip.

If the animal has had previous vaccinations done but without a microchip, a lot of countries, unfortunately, see those vaccinations as 'null and void' because you cannot prove that it was the same animal that was vaccinated. Once the relocation has taken place, the pet has to be re-registered in his/her new country of residence.

Once your pet is microchipped, there are 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.
3. Keep your registration information up to date. If you have 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.



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When a pet 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.

Registration of the Microchip

If you adopt a pet you might not know whether your pet has been microchipped, but the shelter you adopt it from will be able to tell you if it is. Some shelters implant microchips into every animal they adopt out. It is thus advisable to find out your new pet's microchip number to enable you to register your pet in your name.

Most veterinary clinics have microchip scanners, and your veterinarian can scan your new pet for a microchip when you take him or her for a veterinary check-up.

The Kennel Union of South Africa (KUSA) requires that all dogs must be microchipped before they are registered, which places a responsibility on KUSA-registered breeders.

The microchip details can be updated with the new owner's details as soon as the transfer of ownership takes place.

How a Microchip Works



1.

Scan the pet to verify whether he or she has a microchip that has previously been implanted.



2.

Implant the microchip and rescan the pet to verify that the microchip can be found.



3.

Complete the pet's registration with your correct contact details.

