



MICROCHIPS AND TATTOOS

Animals with permanent identification are reunited with their owners more frequently than animals with no identification. Types of permanent identification include tattoos and microchips. At Steveston Veterinary Hospital, we recommend either type of identification. Each has its pros and cons. More and more we are using microchips as the most frequent form of identification.

Microchips

A microchip uses passive Radio Frequency Identification (RFID), where a unique code on the chip is read by a microchip scanner. Microchips are not tracking devices, but they are permanent identification for your pet. A microchip is implanted by using a needle to place the chip under the pet's skin, usually between the shoulder blades. It takes only seconds to place and can be done while the animal is awake. Often we place a microchip at the same time as the spay or neuter surgery while the pet is under anesthesia but it can also be done at a regular appointment. Microchips can be tracked world-wide. When the microchip is implanted, there is a registration form that the company receives that provides the information on the pet and the owners. It is important to keep this information up-to-date so that if a pet is lost, the owners can be contacted. You can also choose to have the microchip information registered with the BC Pet Registry Program which is a centralized pet identification database managed by the British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (BC SPCA). For more information on this program, check out the BC SPCA website under Programs and Services.

Tattoos

Before microchips were used in pet identification, we always used tattoos. Breeders also often tattoo their litters of puppies. There is a province-wide Tattoo Identification Program in place which was started by the College of Veterinarians of British Columbia (CVBC) in 1987. This program is now within the BC Pet Registry Program of the BC SPCA. Tattoos are done only when the animal is under anesthesia. Tattoos are only registered in BC and they can become difficult to read as the pet gets older. Again, as with microchips, it is important to keep your contact information current so that you can be contacted if needed. The tattoo information is kept at your veterinary hospital and you can also choose to have the information registered with the BC Pet Registry.