

Elburn Animal Hospital Newsletter

June, 2011

Welcome

The newsletter for the month of June focuses on microchipping. Microchips have been in use as a system of identifying pets for several decades—this month we'll discuss what a microchip actually is, what kinds of microchips are available in the United States, and how a microchip is implanted into a pet. We'll also meet "Pixie," a Yorkshire terrier whose life was saved by her microchip. Lastly, say goodbye to one of our long-time employees. Any questions can be addressed to a member of our staff at (630) 365-9599, or you can contact us via email at 3lburn@sbcglobal.net.

June: Microchipping Facts

This month we're focusing on microchipping. The facts are out there—microchipping your pet is an excellent form of identification. A pet with a microchip is 80% more likely to be returned to their family after going missing than one without this identification. A long list of FAQs can be found through various websites outlining the benefits of microchipping, so we won't touch on those more than lightly. Instead, we will talk mainly about the different types of microchips available, and the procedure used at veterinary hospitals and animal shelters throughout the country.

What is a Microchip?

To begin a discussion of the different types of microchips available, first we need to discuss what a microchip is, exactly. A microchip is a small piece of silicon encoded with an identification

code, usually consisting of both numbers and letters. The silicon is paired with a small copper inductor and the pair is



coated with a special type of glass that is not biologically inert (not recognized as a foreign object by the body). The inductor picks up radio-wave electricity from a reading device called a scanner; the electrical input activates the computerized code which then bounces the information back to the scanner. Microchips are not GPS locators (although this technology is in the works), but are completely passive. This means that they do not require batteries and do not give off any electrical charge until acted upon by a scanner that utilizes a specific radio frequency. All this technology fits into a package the size of a grain of rice.



Types of Microchips:

There are four different types of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) microchips. The first chips available were manufactured in the late 1980s by AVID and are called FriendChips. These are proprietary microchips encrypted so they are non-readable by older scanners that are not marketed by AVID. Newer scanners are able to at least detect that an AVID chip is present, and some are now able to decrypt the coded information and display the actual microchip ID number. AVID microchips were the first marketed in the United States and, as such, are prevalent throughout the pet-owning world.

The next type of chip is called a Trovan chip. These were introduced in the early 1990s and are now used by the AKC registry. These chips are not as common as the AVID microchip due to some patent problems shortly after their release on the US market, but they are becoming more popular now that the American Kennel Club uses them for their

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Companion Animal Registry. Trovan microchips are readable by scanners marketed through all companies except those from AVID, who continue to produce scanners that read only AVID microchips. Newer (post 2006) Trovan scanners are able to decode AVID microchip encryption, and can read all other types of microchips.

The Destron or FECAVA microchip is a type marketed by several different companies, including Home Again (their original microchip) and 24PetWatch (the microchip we use at Elburn Animal Hospital). These microchips can be read by all scanners and utilize "open technology" with no encryption. Although 24PetWatch does not manufacture their own brand of scanner, Home Again uses a scanner that will read all microchips currently on the market, including encrypted AVID chips and ISO-compliant microchips.

The last type of microchip available is the ISO-compliant microchip. These chips are available as the AVID-Eurochip, the new Home Again ISO-chip, and the 24PetWatch ISO-chip. ISO stands for International Standard of Operation, and describes the manner in which the microchips receive and act as transponders so the information contained within can be retrieved according to a set standard throughout the world. Many countries in the European Union (EU) have laws written specifically stating that an animal cannot travel in the country without an ISO-compliant microchip. Many countries throughout the world prefer the use of ISO-compliant microchips, which allows for the use of a standardized scanner and minimizes the chances of a pet becoming separated from its owner during travel. Unfortunately, many other countries do not subscribe to the standards in the ISO, including the US.

What Does EAH Use?

Here at Elburn Animal Hospital, we've elected to use the 24PetWatch microchip. There are

several reasons behind this decision. First, due to the fact that 24PetWatch does not need to recoup the cost of providing free scanners to

clinics and shelters, the cost of the



microchip has remained low, so we are able to pass the savings on to our clientele. Second, clients are able to choose between an ISO-compliant microchip (mostly used for travel outside the US) and a non-compliant microchip. 24PetWatch maintains a database of patients with their microchip numbers, and any microchip can be registered through their website. For clients that receive the 24PetWatch microchip through a veterinary clinic or shelter, the original registration is free and the information is mailed to the company by us upon completion of the microchipping procedure. To change owner information, 24PetWatch charges either \$14.00/year or \$39.00 for a lifetime of information updates. This is significantly less than other companies, who may charge up to \$25.00 per information change. The last reason is that pet owners can change the information themselves online, and do not have to contact the company directly to order a registration change booklet.

Microchipping Procedure

Lastly, let's discuss the procedure used to microchip a pet, and what to expect. The microchip comes pre-loaded in a sterile 14-gauge needle. For comparison, this is the size needle used when a human donates blood. The pre-loaded needle is scanned electronically to ensure the number coded into the chip is the same as that found on the paperwork. The needle is loaded onto a "slider-gun" which will allow the microchip to be placed easily

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under the pet's skin. Either while awake or while under sedation, the needle is inserted into the loose skin between the shoulder blades (on dogs, cats and horses, and on the



keel of birds) and the slider is used to push the chip out of the

needle and into the loose, fatty space directly under the pet's skin. The needle is removed and the pet is scanned to ensure proper placement. The injection site is cleaned and the procedure is complete.

Sometimes pets yelp or squirm during this procedure and occasionally may bleed a little from the injection site, but on the whole, most pets don't react much even when they are not sedated. Microchips have been safely used in dogs, cats, birds, small mammals, and even fish, as well as many different types of livestock. The entire process takes about five minutes. The staff will need a signature from the client that the registration information is correct, then we send in all required paperwork. The pet owner receives a copy of the registration and we keep on in house as well as recording the chip information in the computer and on the patient's physical chart.



If a pet is found running loose and brought to the police, and animal shelter, animal control or a veterinary clinic, the first thing done is to scan the

animal. If a microchip is found, the number is looked up from a computer database and the owner is traced. Some companies offer emergency-only pet healthcare insurance linked to the identification number. This can be a great help in case an insured pet is injured and needs immediate treatment, especially in cases where the owner isn't immediately available for consent to treatment.

Now you know many more facts about microchipping than what you can find easily online. Of course we recommend microchipping every pet—for their safety and your peace of mind. This month we're featuring a story about one of our very own patients, whose microchip saved her life!

Feature: Spotlighting Our Patients

Meet Pixie, a Yorkshire terrier that lives here in Elburn. Pixie was recently returned to her family after two years. It all started when

Pixie's original owner decided they needed to find a new home that was



better suited to her energy level. They found a good home for Pixie with a family that appeared to care very much about her welfare and wanted to be her forever home. Well, things didn't work out quite the way Pixie's original owner planned. After two years, Pixie was found in University Park in Chicago, abandoned and alone. How a suburban Elburn Dog came to be living in downtown Chicago is largely unknown, but animal control was able to determine poor Pixie had been through at least two homes in that time, and somehow ended up on the streets. Because of her microchip, Pixie's original owners were located. Pixie's more recent owners had never

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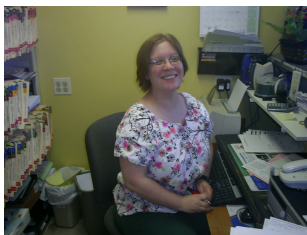
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updated the information. The family could not care for little Pixie, but their son and his wife decided Pixie had had enough moving about and it was time to bring her back to the family that loved her. Now, Pixie is living the high life back in Elburn. She has no known behavior or medical issues, and has such a good-natured personality it's hard to imagine why she changed hands so many times. But finally Pixie's days of being passed around are done, and we're so glad her microchip helped her get home!

Pixie's story is one often repeated in the animal-welfare community. It is nearly impossible to know what happens to a pet after he leaves his owner's care, and even well intentioned people can end up letting down a beloved family pet accidentally. Providing a permanent identification for your pets is vital to their welfare. One of the primary reasons given for not microchipping a pet is that it is an "indoor-only" pet and will not get lost. But that is not always the case, as Pixie unfortunately demonstrated. We have no way of knowing if Pixie was lost or purposefully abandoned, because that family could not be identified. All we can know for sure is that Pixie would not have survived on the streets of Chicago for very long, and we are thankful her family hear in Elburn had the forethought to get her microchipped.

Feature: Saying Goodbye, From Jennie

Once again I need to apologize for the lateness of our monthly newsletter. Things have been a little hectic around here lately, and the newsletter has fallen by the wayside. You see, I'm leaving EAH and heading to Florida for some new adventures.



The decision to leave Elburn Animal Hospital was a tough one to make. Dr Cechner trained me just out of high school as a

veterinary assistant, and I've learned a lot from her, and from my coworkers. I wouldn't be leaving if I didn't believe I was on the road to further myself in the work that I love—working with animals, and helping people learn how to better care for our furred, feathered, and scaled friends.

But there are a lot of things I will miss about EAH. The people I work with are not just fellow employees—they are true friends. Every person employed here is dedicated to making sure our patients are cared for in the best manner possible.

I've always loved that each of us has our own area of interest,



and they all fit together to create a competent whole. Dr C is a great employer, but beyond that, she's an incredibly compassionate person. She's been a friend and a mentor, as well as "the boss" to me. I've been lucky to be a part of this clinic, and I hope to take what I've learned here and share it with others.

Lastly, there are our clients and our patients. From the littlest budgie to the largest mastiff, each one of our patients is unique and special to me. I've enjoyed every minute I've spent working with our patients, and I appreciate how committed our clients are to providing excellent home care to their companions. All of you truly love your pets, and treat them like family members. It's a great feeling to know that the pets we see here are taken care of so well.

Thank you all for the memories you've given me and the lessons you've taught me. I wish our clients and patients well, and I will miss so many of you! Take care of Dr C and the staff at

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EAH—they're great people.

With Love,
Jennie Kanyok
Lead tech at EAH

In July our newsletter is all about rabbits! It's rabbit adoption month, so we'll talk about living life with a rabbit, and where to find one to adopt. If you have any questions or concerns, or would like more information, visit our website at www.elburnanimalhospital.com, or give us a call at (630) 365-9599. If you would like to opt out of receiving our newsletter, please send an email to us at 3lburn@sbcglobal.net.

June Special: Mention this ad to receive 25% off a 24PetWatch microchip. The procedure can be performed while you wait. ☺

Upcoming Event: Annual Open House

It's time once again for our annual open house. This year it will be held on Saturday September 24. We will have games and prizes for all our friends—both the human and the animal variety! Join us for a day to celebrate our clients, our patients, and our adoptable friends from TAILS.

Do you have an idea for a newsletter? A question you'd like answered about caring for your pet? Email us at 3lburn@sbcglobal.net and let us know! We are always interested in what you have to say, and what you want to know.