



NYSVMS Policy on Microchipping of companion animals, birds and horses

The NYSVMS recommends that veterinarians adopt a policy of scanning each companion animal, bird or horse for the presence of a microchip at the initial visit and as part of the annual physical exam after that, using a universal backward/forward compatible scanner. Scanning animals for microchips is necessary for the identification system to be effective. If a microchip is found, the number should be included in the patient's record.

If a chip is known to have been implanted, this allows the veterinarian to:

1. Ensure the chip is functioning and is located properly.
2. Remind the owner to make sure the chip is registered and that the registered information is current.

If an unknown chip is detected, the veterinarian should:

1. Inform the client, and
 - a. Provide the client with the contact information for the appropriate microchip database;
 - b. Encourage the client to contact the database;
 - c. Contact the database if the clients requests the veterinarian do so.

The presence of an unknown chip doesn't necessarily mean the person presenting the pet is not the owner. The chip may have been implanted by a breeder, pet store, shelter, etc. and not properly registered, or the database may not have been updated.

2. Document in the patient's medical record that he/she spoke to the client about these matters.

AAHA has developed an on-line universal look up site (<http://www.petmicrochip-lookup.com>) that may assist in finding the correct microchip database and its phone number.

The veterinarian is not expected to investigate or resolve ownership disputes over an animal, nor should a veterinarian be held liable for relying on a client's claim of ownership following scanning.

Recommended sites for implantation are:

1. Cats and dogs: subcutaneously on the dorsal midline just cranial on the scapula;
2. Birds: in the pectoral muscle;
3. Horses: on the left side approximately at the level of the 3rd or 4th cervical vertebrae into the nuchal ligament.

Removal of microchips should only be done when there is assurance of ownership.