



Using identification (ID) for your pets can help them return home if lost. Having more than one type of ID, like a microchip and tags on a collar is best. In this guide we cover types of ID, recommendations, and answer some commonly asked questions.

## Types of Identification

### Permanent ID

Permanent ID can't be lost or removed and should be provided by a veterinary professional, to ensure the safety of the animal.

Tattoos: Typically placed inside the ear to ensure they are easy to see and read, tattoos are often a combination of numbers and letters identifying the vet clinic where the guardian's contact information and records are available.

| Tattoo Identification  |  |
|--|--|
| Pros   | Cons   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🐾 Visible ID</li> <li>🐾 Routinely checked by agencies and clinics who support stray animals</li> <li>🐾 Tied to the guardian's file at the clinic</li> <li>🐾 Easy to incorporate into existing surgery schedules for pets</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🐾 Prone to fading over time</li> <li>🐾 Requires anesthesia</li> <li>🐾 Pets must be taken to a vet or animal control agency to be traced</li> <li>🐾 Contact information only available at the issued vet clinic</li> </ul> |

Microchip: A small electronic chip is implanted between the shoulder blades using a needle. When scanned, it displays the registration, which is then contacted to get the guardians' information.

*Microchips ONLY contain information linked to a registry and are not GPS trackers.*

| Microchip Identification   |  |
|--|--|
| Pros   | Cons   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🐾 Resistant to damage</li> <li>🐾 Long-lasting</li> <li>🐾 Routinely checked by agencies and clinics who support stray animals</li> <li>🐾 No anesthetic is required to implant</li> <li>🐾 Tracing can be done through an online database</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🐾 The chip may migrate from the implant site, making for less accurate scans</li> <li>🐾 Not visible ID</li> <li>🐾 Pets must be taken to an agency with a microchip scanner available</li> </ul> |

***Tip:** You can get your pet microchipped at any routine vet visit. Ask your vet to scan for your pet's microchip during check-ups to make sure it's in the right location, that it reads properly, and has the most up to date information on file.*

## Non-Permanent ID

Non-permanent ID can be fun to pick out, easy to put on your pet, and easy to read by a person who has found a lost pet.

ID tags: Attached to your pet's collar, tags should contain your contact information. Tags let others know your pet has a home and if they become lost, there is a way to help reunite you and your pet. Good tags contain a minimum of your pet's name, your phone number, and address. EHS recommends using a breakaway collar, as it will quickly release from your pet should it get tangled up to prevent choking.

| Identification Tags   |   |
|---|---|
| Pros  | Cons  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🐾 Put on yourself! No vet required</li> <li>🐾 Easy to find</li> <li>🐾 Visible to finders</li> <li>🐾 Lots of styles to suit you and your pet</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🐾 Can become damaged or lost</li> <li>🐾 Can be removed</li> <li>🐾 Needs to be replaced if your contact information or address changes</li> </ul> |

*Tip: For pets nervous about wearing tags, you can embroider your information on their collar. You can also use tag silencers, like silicone wraps or a fabric pouch, to reduce tag noise.*

## Which ID to Use?

No single form of ID is foolproof, so we recommend having multiple, and when possible, one of them being a microchip. This gives your pet the best chance of returning home if they become lost.

*Important: Whenever you move or change your phone number, be sure to update your contact information on your pet's ID and/or their microchip registration.*

## Benefits of ID

- 🐾 Greater Chance of Being Reunited
  - Visible ID lets people know your pet has a home and may encourage them to help the lost pet. Even collars without tags or visible tattoos can encourage people to take a lost pet to a local vet clinic, animal control, or humane society to have its tattoo traced and microchip scanned.
- 🐾 Longer Hold Times for Animals with ID
  - Often Animal Care & Control agencies have an extended hold time on animals with ID. This gives you more time to reclaim your pet.
- 🐾 Lower Reclaim Fees
  - It is common to pay kennel fees when reclaiming pets. Having ID can result in a shorter stay for pets and may reduce reclaim fees.
- 🐾 Provides Proof of Ownership
  - If your pet is lost or stolen, a microchip and/or collar with tags can be used to show you are their guardian and help you reclaim your pet.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **My pet is an indoor pet. Do they still need ID?**

The answer is Yes! Accidents happen and even our indoor-only pets can get lost. Animals can sometimes be unpredictable and can dash out of an open door or run away when startled. Open gates, broken latches, and other accidents are common causes of lost pets.

### **How hard is it to get your pet microchipped or tattooed?**

Microchips can be implanted during any regular vet appointment because anesthesia isn't needed. Tattoos do require anesthetics, so are generally done during an already scheduled surgery like a spay or neuter for convenience, but you can easily schedule a vet appointment for a tattoo.

### **Can ID harm my pet?**

Tattoos and microchips require some monitoring after application, but typically have minor and manageable aftereffects. Scanning a microchip is a quick and painless process for your pet. With physical ID, it's possible that collars can become caught on objects, but using a quick-release collar reduces the risk of injury.

### **Is ID expensive?**

When you consider potential reclaim costs or not recovering your pet, having ID is a worthwhile investment. Actual prices of microchips and tattoos vary per clinic -- please contact your clinic for exact prices. Standard ID tags generally cost between \$5 and \$20 CAD, and you can find a great selection of tags online, in pet stores, and at the [Edmonton Humane Society](#).

### **How do I update my contact information?**

- 🐾 **Microchips:** Many registries allow you to call or log in to your account and update information as needed. If you need to find out your pet's microchip registry or number, you can contact your vet clinic or adoption agency to check records. You can also ask for your pet to be scanned on their next vet visit.
- 🐾 **Tattoos:** To update the information linked to a tattoo, you must call the clinic that gave your pet the tattoo. If you cannot remember where your pet's tattoo came from, ask your local veterinarian for help with tracing the tattoo.
- 🐾 **ID Tags:** For tags or other wearable IDs, have a fun day shopping for a new tag or collar whenever you change your phone number or move to a new address.

*Tip: If you lose your pet, make sure your voicemail inbox is available in case someone tries to contact you and leave a message.*

### **Additional Resources:**

For more information on lost or found pets, visit our website:

<https://www.edmontonhumanesociety.com/what-we-do/services/lost-found-pets/>

It takes approximately \$7 million to keep the Edmonton Humane Society operational for one year and 40% of these funds come from generous donations made by supporters like you. Please [Donate](#).