

# Why should my cat wear a collar?

(Especially if he or she will not be going outside)

Keeping your pet safe is a top priority for cat owners. Our furry friends count on us to fulfill all of their basic needs. One of the simplest things you can do to insure your cat's safety is to make sure he or she has a collar and ID.

There is no sadder sight than the flyers, which cover telephone poles and storefronts, put up by owners who have lost their pets. Every year, millions of pets get separated from their human families and are never seen again. Often well-meaning animal lovers who are unable to locate the pet's owners adopt them. All too often they end up in shelters, often far from their homes and therefore unclaimed.

Providing your cat with a collar with an ID tag, as well as with a Microchip ID, is great insurance against losing him or her. **Even cats who are kept indoors can fall victim to loss. In fact, if your pet is not used to being outside, it is more likely that she'll lose her way if she accidentally gets out of the house.** Unfortunately it is not unusual for indoor pets to get out – it only takes a moment for a usually shy cat to slip past an unsuspecting visitor and end up wandering the neighborhood.

An identification tag is the simplest tool for ensuring your cat will make it home safely and quickly if she becomes lost. Make sure the tag includes your pet's name and your current telephone number. If your cat seems to hate the ID tag, you may want to consider getting an imprinted collar.

Identification chips are tiny microchips, about the size of a grain of rice, that are inserted under the skin between the shoulder blades. Here's how they work. Each chip is coded with an identification number, which is stored in a database. Your veterinarian or shelter inserts the chip with a hollow needle; it's just like getting a shot. You fill out a form that lists your cat's name and description, your contact information, and an alternate emergency number. If your lost cat is found and taken to a shelter or veterinarian's office, a scan will reveal the chip. A phone call is all that is needed to let you know that your pet has been found.

Often cat owners are wary of outfitting their pets with collars. They worry that the collar will catch on a branch or fencepost, trapping the cat and potentially injuring him or her. For very active cats, particularly those who spend time outside, breakaway collars are a good choice. If it gets caught and he or she pulls hard on it, the collar will open up, freeing the cat.

Hopefully, your cat will never get lost! But if he or she does, a few simple steps are all it takes to make sure that she will be returned promptly.