

FACTSHEET

Microchipping and registering your cat

What is microchipping?

A microchip is the size of a grain of rice and contains a unique numerical barcode which can be read with a scanner. The chip is implanted under the skin at the back of the cat's neck, between the neck and shoulder blades. It is no more painful than having an injection and doesn't require sedation. You are not likely to be able to feel the chip. The numbers on the barcode are entered into a confidential database, the NSW Pet Registry, along with the cat's details and the contact details of the owner.

It is important to note microchipping and registration are two separate things and just because your cat is microchipped does not mean they are registered. You will need to register your cat after they are microchipped.

It is a good idea to routinely ask your vet to scan your cat's microchip with each vet visit as in rare cases the microchip can travel to different areas of the body or fall out. As mentioned, this is very rare but it is best to double check with your vet just in case.

A microchip is not a tracking device!

A microchip is not the same as a GPS or tracking device – it is simply a barcode, as you see on items in shops that are scanned at the cash register. It will not 'find' your cat if your cat is lost. If your cat is lost, and then found by someone and taken to a vet, shelter or pound, they can scan your cat for a microchip and then look up the microchip numbers in the Pet Registry to find your contact details. They can then contact you to let you know they have found your cat.

It is important to know that your information is kept confidential and only authorised people can access this information. It is also vitally important to keep your contact details up-to-date so that you can be reunited with your cat if they do become lost. This includes your address, phone number and email address.

Why does your cat need a microchip?

If you care about your cat, you will make sure they are microchipped and registered so that they can always be reunited with you should they ever become lost. It is also the law in NSW that any cat born after 1999 must have a microchip. It is illegal to sell or give away a cat without a microchip.

Tragically, the majority of unidentified, unregistered cats do not leave pounds alive: they are neither reunited nor adopted but euthanased. Don't let your cat become a tragic statistic – make sure they are microchipped, registered, and that your contact details are always up-to-date.

How to register your cat in NSW

When your cat is microchipped, you will be asked to sign a form with all your contact details on it. A copy of this form will be given to you to keep. The authorised microchip implanter will keep a copy and enter the microchip number and your details into the NSW Pet Registry.

The NSW Pet Registry is an online confidential database of microchipped and registered cats and dogs which owners can access to add and modify their details.

If you have access to a computer or internet-enabled mobile device, you can complete the registration of your cat (including payment of the lifetime registration fee) by creating an owner profile and linking yourself to your cat's microchip number. You can log back in at any time to update your contact details, notify your cat as missing and even transfer ownership.

If you don't have online access or an email address, you can still register your cat, change and update details and notify your cat as missing by visiting your local council.

If you are adopting from Cat Protection, registration will be completed with you at the time of adoption. As of July 2021, the registration fee for a cat or kitten adopted from a pound or shelter is waived. The process of registration is still completed but no fee is payable.

By law, cats must be registered by 4 months of age, so we recommend you adopt a kitten who is already desexed – such as a kitten from Cat Protection – or you make sure to book your kitten in for desexing before they are 12 weeks of age. Your kitten can be safely desexed from 10 weeks of age. If your cat is not desexed, you will be required to pay an annual permit fee until your cat is desexed.

You can still create a profile on the NSW Pet Registry if you already own microchipped and registered pets. We strongly recommend this as the easiest way to manage your contact details and giving you the best chance of being reunited with your pets should they ever become lost, injured, or stolen.

For more information visit www.petregistry.nsw.gov.au

Collars & tags

You might wish to consider a collar and tag (with your phone number on it) if your cat goes outside. This gives a clear indication your cat is owned, but it is also a simple way for a member of the public to contact you should they find your cat. Remember, only authorised staff in places such as pounds, vet clinics and shelters can scan for microchips and access the Pet Registry.

Always ensure the collar is fitted correctly and has a safety clasp in case your cat gets stuck on something. Collars that are fitted incorrectly can be very dangerous for cats, discuss with your vet or call us to find out the best type of collar for your cat.

Tracking devices

There are a number of new pet-tracking devices on the market and these work either via radio frequency (RF) or global positioning system (GPS). These devices attach to a collar and the device sends information to a handset, computer or smartphone. These devices have had some novelty value, but we recommend discussing this with your vet if it is

something you are interested in for your cat. We recommend keeping your cat safe by keeping them confined to your property where possible.

We recommend keeping all your cat's paperwork in a special file so you can easily access information that is needed, as well as maintaining an up-to-date online profile on the NSW Pet Registry. These simple steps will be invaluable in case of emergency and will give your cat the best chance of being returned to you if they are ever lost, stolen or injured.

While all care has been taken in preparing this document, it is intended to provide general information only and should not be taken as constituting professional advice. Mention of a product or business does not mean endorsement by Cat Protection.