

## This Month: Identification!

### Pet Identification

There are various methods of IDing your pet to insure a safe trip home in the case that they are lost. The three most common methods are a collar with tags, tattooing the ears or inner thigh, and microchips inserted under the skin.

**Tags:** The most common method of identification for both dogs and cats is a good-fitting collar with tags. This is going to be your first line of defense against losing your pet. Make sure collars are snug, with enough room for two of your fingers to fit between the collar and neck. This will insure that your pet is comfortable in the collar but that it won't slip off easily. Make sure that you have not only the correct rabies tag on your collar (animals can be looked up at your vet by their rabies tag number) but also a tag with the pet's name and your current phone number. Cat collars usually have a mechanism in the catch so that it will break away if the cat gets it stuck on something like a tree limb, so collars aren't always reliable on cats. Dog collars have also been known to slip off or be chewed off by the pet, so make sure your dog's collar is on snugly and if you can get a brand that guarantees against chewing, such as the Lupine or Bison collars.

**Tattoos:** A much more permanent procedure for IDing your pet is tattooing them with a identification number. Done either with a surgery or during an exam, tattooing is a relatively quick and easy method of permanent identification. A number is punched with small needles into the inner ear or thigh of an animal and ink is then rubbed into the holes made by the needles to make a permanent tattoo with a unique identification number. Because tattoo's last so long, the mark will always show up on your pet and be a way for shelters and clinics to identify your pet if it comes in after being found.

**Microchips:** Also a permanent procedure for IDing your pet (and used much more frequently nowadays) is the microchip. The microchip is a small chip about the size of a grain of rice that is inserted just under the skin, usually between the shoulder blades. It contains a unique identification number for your pet that, unlike a tattoo, is impossible to change or remove. All rescue facilities and veterinarians are provided with a scanning device that will retrieve and show the number on its screen, and once found the identification number can be called in to the database and the owners or veterinarian of the pet located. The microchip also comes with a bright yellow tag that can be put on your pet's collar so that a neighbor or someone else that finds your pet can call and read the number over the phone without having to scan your animal. Microchips numbers are also put into a nationwide database, so if your pet gets lost in Texas, and you live in Maine, you can still be found and alerted as to where your pet is.

### Nina:

Nina was micro-chipped at the FRAH in early April of this year. Shortly after the procedure, Nina got out of her yard and decided to take a stroll around the neighborhood, getting herself lost. Her owner called to report the loss and see if we had heard anything about her. Later that same afternoon, the front desk staff got a call from another clinic saying they had found a dog, scanned it and retrieved the microchip number, which pointed them to us. We were happy to call the owner and let him know where he could find his precious pooch.

### Rover:

Rover got loose on Folly Road earlier this month and ended up in the FRAH's parking lot. He was scanned for a chip and the number retrieved. When we called the microchip number in, we were told that Rover's parents had not provided their contact information and so there was no way to get a hold of them, but we could find the clinic that microchip had been sent to. After calling the clinic and giving them the microchip number, they were able to look up Rover's microchip number in the computer and contact his parents who gratefully came to retrieve their furry friend.

These are just two of the many happy endings we have seen at the Folly Road Animal Hospital because of the microchip and other proper IDing procedures. If you would like to schedule an appointment to make sure your own pet is properly IDed, please call the front desk staff who would be more than happy to help keep your dog or cat safe from being accidentally lost.

If your dog or cat is lost, whether or not they have identification on them, be sure to call local vets and rescue shelters, talk to your neighbors and put up posters in the area. Persistence is the key to finding a lost pet, and many times you will find that a neighbor has been keeping them safe until they could find his real home.

### Dog Flu

You have probably heard news reports of a dog flu virus spreading through kennels and dog tracks around the country. This virus, mutated from a strain that affects horses, was first seen in greyhounds at racetracks and has since has been found in kennels across the country. Although it is spread most easily where dogs are housed together, it can also be transferred through daily walks or trips to the dog park, and humans may be able to transfer it from one dog to another. The canine flu is highly contagious because dogs have no natural immunity to it yet, and of those who contract it about 80% will develop symptoms which closely mirror kennel cough symptoms with an aggressive cough and runny nose. There is no vaccine available for the canine influenza yet, but if symptoms are caught soon enough, immediate veterinary care can get the animal back to health without any severe side effects. If the cough is allowed to persist long enough, however, the dog can develop pneumonia which can lead to fatality. The current fatality rate is only 5-8%, so if you notice your dog has a cough, low grade fever, and runny nose, get him to a veterinarian immediately to make sure you get him care before it's too late.

### Success Story: Orange!

Orange was a 12 year old, neutered male, shorthair cat who presented to the FRAH with chronic weight loss that remained undiagnosed at another vet clinic. Orange's owner was so worried, she was planning to get a 'CAT' scan (no pun intended) but decided to try the FRAH before taking such exotic measures.

Dr. Sheridan detected lung abnormalities and a mass on the tongue during a routine exam. X-rays and blood work were performed and Orange was sedated for a more thorough oral exam. Three masses were removed from the base of his tongue with electrocautery and sent out for histopathology. Dr. Sheridan gave a cortisone injection and Orange started eating with gusto that same day.

The Histopath results confirmed that Orange suffered from a disease called 'eosinophilic granuloma complex'. This disease is responsive to cortisone and in some cats it can be rather mild with only the lips being affected. In Orange's case, not only was his mouth affected, but also his lungs. To date, Orange is breathing easy and gaining weight.

### Dates, Upcoming News, Specials:

#### Attention Boarding Clients:

Boarding prices are changing starting November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2005 due to the increase in prices for maintaining our facility. The new prices are as follows:

Dogs: \$13/night

Cats: \$11/night

The holidays are booking up quickly, so call now for Thanksgiving and Christmas boarding!

Fall and Spring's milder weather is the perfect breeding ground for ticks. If your dog gets a tick, buy some tick tweezers to safely remove the entire tick (including the head) and make sure to keep your dog well protected with Frontline or Preventic collars.

Want to get a head start on next year's flea season? Keeping your pet on Frontline or Revolution throughout the winter months will insure that they will be flea-free come next spring! Doing the same for heartworm prevention will insure that your favorite furry friend is heartworm negative all year long too!

Did you miss last month's newsletter? Don't worry! The FRAH Newsletter is now on the web!

[www.follyroadanimalhospital.com/newsletter.htm](http://www.follyroadanimalhospital.com/newsletter.htm)

### December skin tests!

**Get \$20 off a skin test in December!** Has your dog been itchy all summer? Winter is the perfect time to get him tested to find out exactly what he is allergic to. Because your pet must be steroid-free (no prednisone!) for two weeks before the tests, winter is an ideal time to get them done with less antigens and fewer fleas out to bug your furry friend. For more information on skin allergies, see the September edition of our Newsletter at [www.follyroadanimalhospital.com/newsletter.htm](http://www.follyroadanimalhospital.com/newsletter.htm)