

Dr. Jeff Werber, DVM

Jeff has more than 30 years of experience in the veterinary industry and is a licensed veterinarian as well as a founding member of IDEXX's Pet Health Network team.

[Dr. Jeff Werber](#) is an Emmy Award-winning, nationally renowned veterinarian and former president of the Association of Veterinary Communicators. For more from Dr. Werber, find him on [Facebook](#) or on his website at www.drjeff.com.

I have the privilege of working with a number of rescue groups in the Los Angeles area, and last week heard a first-hand story which really hit home. One of our rescue groups was trying to intercept a Chow Chow who was found on the streets and was being brought in to the shelter. The dog was in horrendous condition, malnourished, probably around 8 to 10 years of age, and, probably mostly out of fear, very aggressive. Based on the dog's condition, aggressive tendencies, and the shelter's sad overcrowding situation, this poor dog didn't have a chance of being cleaned up, treated, and hopefully, adopted.

As good fortune would have it, the dog was scanned for a microchip during his intake exam, and sure enough, had one. Well, this changed everything. For one thing, it bought this poor creature a lot more time. You see, if a dog ends up in a shelter and is microchipped, he or she cannot be destroyed—even in kill shelters, until concerted efforts have been made to contact the dog's last registered owner. In this case, instead of being placed on "death row," that little microchip, about the size of a tiny grain of rice, played a huge role in saving this dog's life.

Though the shelter was unable to connect with the dog's last registered owners, the extra time was enough for the Chow Chow rescue group to complete the adoption procedure. Now not afraid, he is actually a sweet dog in a great foster home.

Please don't think that an identification tag is all you need to keep your pet safe should he or she ever get

away. Collars and tags can fall off, can be taken off, can wear out, and can be modified. There is certainly nothing "permanent" about them. Microchips, on the other hand, are absolutely permanent, are immutable, and, despite a few reports over that passed few years, are extremely safe.

If your pet is not currently microchipped, I highly recommend having it done as soon as possible—that chip might just save its life!

If you have any questions or concerns, you should always visit or call your veterinarian – they are your best resource to ensure the health and well-being of your pets.

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