


Help your pet get back home

Posted: Feb 18, 2011 4:58 PM EST Updated: Feb 23, 2011 5:49 PM EST



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ALBANY, GA (WALB) - Ten million pets get lost every year, and sadly, nine million of those pets are never reunited with their owners. And many of those pets who get lost have medical conditions, or require medicine daily.

But there is a way you can make sure your pet is properly identified, and even a way to communicate your pet's medical needs to whoever finds him.

Veterinarians say it happens all the time, where pets get lost and it is almost impossible to find their owner. Sometimes it can take up to four days to locate an owner, which can be dangerous and even deadly for a pet requiring daily medication.

No matter how well you've puppy proofed your house, chances are your pet will still find a way to get out. "I try very hard to keep up with where they are and who is coming in the yard so they don't let them out," said Jane Rhodes, who knows the terrifying feeling too well.

Same goes for Dr. Charlie Deriso. "Almost everyone of my dogs have gotten at one time or another, I've had to ride through neighborhoods to find them."

And without identification, that can be a very scary feeling for a pet owner.

"Oh I would be devastated, I love my animals I always have, And some pets have urgent medical needs, and require daily medication. If someone finds them and does not realize they need that medication it can become a crisis pretty quickly with them," said Rhodes.

Thankfully, there is now a way pet owners can communicate their pet's medical needs and ID information to anyone who finds their pet. The website is called Pethealthalert.com, and by registering your pet, you can display all of your pet's needs on the internet.

"That can be very important for the healthy patients and the diabetic patients who need care on a regular basis," said Dr. Deriso.

After you register for the free service, you buy a tag for five dollars that reads 'go to pethealthalert.com,' states your pet's medical disability, and has a tag number on it.

Whoever finds your pet can visit the website, type in the tag number and all your pet's important health and contact information is available.

But doctors say in addition to ID tags, it is also helpful to have a micro chip implanted in your pet in case he slips out of his collar.

Dr. Deriso says a big mistake some people make once that micro chip is implanted into their dog, is they forget to register their animal online, which pretty much makes it pointless.

So he says it may be best to have a micro chip and a collar with all the ID information.

Here are some websites that can be very helpful-

- www.pethealthalert.com