

## Herp Microchip Identification

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*By Margaret A. Wissman, DVM, DABVP*

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Microchipping is a very safe procedure for herps of a certain size. Hatchlings and juveniles may be chipped once they have matured to a reasonable size. Small herps should not be microchipped routinely. The chip implanter utilizes a 10-gauge needle, which is the size used to catheterize a vein in humans when we donate blood, so it is a big needle!

In birds, the general rule is to not microchip birds weighing less than 100 grams, but I can't say that I have seen such rules for herps. Generally, I won't attempt to microchip any herp that I don't feel comfortable inserting a 10-gauge needle into, so this really varies depending on the size, musculature, build and individual characteristics of the herp. Be aware that all chips are not compatible with all readers, so this can be a problem when trying to identify a herp with the incorrect reader for that chip.

Chips are very safe when properly implanted, and they are coated with a substance that prevents them from migrating, so they stay where implanted. They are usually surrounded with fibrous connective tissue that holds them in place once implanted.

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### Need a Herp Vet?

If you are looking for a herp-knowledgeable veterinarian in your area, a good place to start is by checking the list of members on the Association of Reptilian and Amphibian Veterinarian (ARAV) web site at [www.arav.com](http://www.arav.com). Look for DVMs who appear to maintain actual veterinary offices that you could contact.