

Pharmaceutical giant [Merck](#) is being sued. The lawsuit alleges that Merck's [HomeAgain pet microchip](#) induced cancer in a cat.

Dr. Katherine Albrecht, a consumer advocate and expert on implantable microchip reactions, said that, "Based on the alarming number of microchip-linked cancers we're discovering, I predict this lawsuit will be just the tip of the iceberg."

Chip Me Not reports that there are:

"... [A] growing number of adverse reactions to microchips, including the chip-related cancer deaths of two dogs within the past year."

### Sources:

- [Chip Me Not October 13, 2010](#)

The reason why this is an important issue is that many predict there will be a massive push by government authorities to microchip humans. Not only will this be a mistake for privacy reasons, but it appears that there are also serious health consequences.

Fortunately, our pets are serving as canaries for this health challenge and providing us with an early warning alert as to what would happen if we choose to get these microchips.

Most [humane societies](#) and rescue organizations now require that adopted pets be microchipped, and many veterinarians recommend the chips as well. In all it's estimated that about 5 percent of U.S. pets have microchips, along with countless farm animals, laboratory animals and wild salmon (used to track their movement).

About the size of a grain of rice, pet microchips contain a radio transmitter, an antenna and a computer chip that is read by a scanner, allowing animal control, vets or shelters to obtain owners' information in the event a pet gets lost.

The benefit, of course, is that a [lost dog](#) or cat without tags that is picked up by a shelter has a better chance of finding its owner if a microchip is present and scanned. But there are potentially serious drawbacks as well, and chief among them is a concerning number of cases linking the microchips to cancer.

### Do Pet Microchips Cause Cancer?

Pharmaceutical giant Merck is being sued over claims that its HomeAgain pet microchip caused cancer in a cat. Two years after the chip was implanted, the cat developed a [cancerous tumor](#) at the implant site. The tumor was removed surgically, and the microchip was found embedded in the tumor.

As [ChipMeNot.org](#) reported, the cat's veterinarian wrote in the medical record, "The microchip was found at the center of the mass."

This is far from an isolated case.

In 2007, Dr. Katherine Albrecht released an [in-depth analysis of animal studies involving microchip implants](#) and found a "clear causal link between microchip implants and cancer in mice and rats," as well as an association with [cancer in dogs](#).

In mice and rats, between 1 percent and 10 percent of the animals developed invasive cancers surrounding or attached to the implant. There have also been two confirmed cases of dogs developing cancer surrounding or attached to the microchip implant.

Dr. Albrecht noted:

*"Foreign-body-induced tumors can pose serious threats to animal health. Researchers report that most tumors arising from foreign bodies are malignant mesenchymal neoplasms with a rapid growth rate, killing the animal in a matter of weeks.*

*Many of the study animals with microchip-associated tumors died prematurely due to the masses. In addition, many of the tumors metastasized, spreading cancer to the lungs, liver, stomach, pancreas, and other organs."*

You can read [dozens of case histories](#) of dogs, cats, horses and other animals developing tumors at the microchip implant site at [ChipMeNot.org](#).

### Pet Microchips Don't Always Work as Advertised

When deciding on any medical procedure, it's wise to weigh the risks versus the benefits. In the case of pet microchips, there appears to be a serious risk of cancer that is still emerging, while the benefit is increasing your chance of finding your pet if they're lost.

But that benefit may be a bit misleading because of the way the chips operate. There are four main brands of microchips used in the United States, and generally each brand requires a *different type of scanner* to be read. If your pet winds up at an [animal shelter](#) without a compatible

scanner, the chip cannot be read.

Likewise, the chips must be read at a very close distance of 3-12 inches. Normally the microchip is implanted between the shoulder blades, but on occasion they can migrate under the shoulder blade, up to the back of the neck -- or even all the way down to the belly.

This means that if your pet's chip has migrated, there's a good chance the scanner will not pick up the signal.

Assuming the chip is read, it's imperative that you have kept your contact information updated correctly (if you have moved, changed phone numbers, etc.) with the chip's registration site, or else the chip will again be useless.

### **What About Microchips Proposed for People?**

As mentioned previously, subdermal microchips are being developed for numerous human uses, ranging from keeping tabs on your kids to implantable credit and debit cards, allowing customers to make purchases by scanning themselves with special readers at store checkouts. Many of these chips, such as one variety that grants people VIP access at nightclubs, are already in use.

One such brand, VeriChip, is even developing implantable virus detection systems for humans.

These biosensors can allegedly detect viruses such as [swine flu](#), [bird flu](#), [SARS](#), and other biological threats such as methicillin-resistant [Staphylococcus aureus](#) (MRSA). The technology will be combined with VeriChip's implantable [radio frequency identification devices](#) (RFID) to develop "virus triage detection systems."

According to a [white paper published by VeriChip on May 7, 2009](#), this triage system will provide "multiple levels of identification." The first level will identify the agent as virus or non-virus, the second level will classify the virus and alert the user to the presence of [pandemic](#) threat viruses, and the third level will identify the precise pathogen.

To some this may sound like a good idea, but to me this seems like it could be a prescription for massive government intrusion, loss of personal freedom and, as in other animals, potentially increased cancer risks.

As Dr. Robert Benezra, head of the Cancer Biology Genetics Program at the [Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center](#) in New York, said in Dr. Albrecht's paper:

*"There's no way in the world, having read this information, that I would have one of those chips implanted in my skin, or in one of my family members ... Given the preliminary animal data, it looks to me that there's definitely cause for concern."*

Dr. George Demetri, director of the Center for [Sarcoma](#) and Bone [Oncology](#) at the [Dana-Farber Cancer Institute](#) in Boston, further noted, also in Dr. Albrecht's paper, that research underscored "certainly real risks" in RFID implants, adding that the tumors can be "incredibly aggressive and can kill people in three to six months."

### **Stay Informed Before Getting Microchipped**

It may be some time before implantable microchips become commonplace for humans, but it will likely become a "wave of the future" well within our lifetimes. Many are already here and in use, but before deciding to take part be sure you are completely aware of all the potential risks posed.

For pets, the microchips are already being widely used and heavily promoted. If you're a pet owner, you'll need to weigh the benefits versus the risks carefully ...

For more information, [Mercola.com](#) veterinarian [Dr. Karen Becker](#) recently reviewed this topic in depth. I highly recommend [watching her video](#) to make an educated and informed decision.

### **Related Links:**

- [How Safe are Pet Microchips?](#)
- [Is the VeriChip the "Mark of the Beast?!"](#)
- [Under Your Skin Computer Chip Has Now Arrived](#)