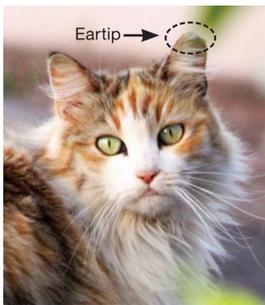


## PROTOCOLS: EARTIPPING

Eartipping is an effective and universally accepted method to identify a spayed or neutered and vaccinated community cat. Eartipping is the removal of the distal one-quarter of a cat's left ear, which is approximately 3/8 inch, or 1 cm, in an adult and proportionally smaller in a kitten.

This procedure is performed under sterile conditions while the cat is already anesthetized for spay or neuter surgery. There is little or no bleeding, it is relatively painless to the cat, and the eartip does not significantly alter the appearance or beauty of the cat.



Eartipping is the preferred method to identify spayed or neutered and vaccinated community cats, because it is difficult to get close to them and therefore the identification must be visible from a distance. Community cats may interact with a variety of caregivers, veterinarians, and animal

control personnel during their lives and so immediate visual identification is necessary to prevent an unnecessary second trapping and surgery.

**No other method of identification has proven to be as safe or as effective as eartipping.**

Alley Cat Allies and other groups across the country do not support the following methods:

- Tattooing is not effective because the tattoo is not visible until cats are trapped and anesthetized.
- Eartags are ineffective because they can cause infection, drop off, or tear cats' ears.

- Collars are not safe or practical for community cats, because as the cats grow and gain weight, the collars will tighten and could strangle them; the collars could get caught on something and severely injure or kill the cats; and the collars could also fall off leaving the cats unidentified.
- Microchipping alone is not effective because it does not allow for visual identification. It is only effective once cats have been trapped and taken to a shelter or clinic that uses a scanner to find implanted microchips. It does not prevent unnecessary trapping.

### EARTIPPING INSTRUCTIONS:

Immediately after surgery, while the cat is still under anesthesia:

1. Place a straight hemostat across the tip of the left ear exposing no more than 3/8 inch for an adult cat and proportionally less for a kitten.
2. Use a straight blade or scalpel to cut the tip off, leaving the hemostat on the ear.
3. Apply a small amount of styptic powder to the cut edge.
4. Keep the hemostat on the cat's ear until just before returning the cat to its trap, to reduce bleeding. A small amount of blood may appear, but it will not need further attention.

Watch a veterinarian eartip a cat at [www.alleycat.org/Eartipping](http://www.alleycat.org/Eartipping).