

## What is an Ear-Tip and Why is it Important?



If you've noticed an outdoor cat with a part of his ear missing – just the top of the left ear—that's the sign of a cat who is healthy and cared for! An eartip is the universally recognized symbol of a community cat who has been spayed or neutered and vaccinated. Eartipping is a standard part of most Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) programs, because it's simply the best method to let everyone know at a glance that a cat has gone through a TNR program.

Because cats are eartipped while they're under anesthesia for spay or neuter surgery, everything is safe, clean, and painless. The top 3/8 inch of the ear is removed. The ear heals quickly and no further attention is needed. You might be worried about the cat looking different, but the eartip doesn't hurt her, and it could actually save her life.

Eartips are a critical safeguard for outdoor cats. Some outdoor cats prefer to keep their distance, but most eartips can be seen from even several feet away. Plus, no matter who interacts with the cat (caregivers, vets, animal control), they can all tell that she has an outdoor home. That's a big deal when it comes to animal control agencies and shelters—having an eartip could prevent an unsocialized outdoor cat from being admitted to a shelter where she might end up being killed. An eartip also allows a caregiver who is setting traps to know this cat has already been neutered.

