



MICRO FRACTURES

FACT SHEET



WHAT ARE MICRO-FRACTURES AND WHAT CAUSES THEM?

Micro-fractures, or hairline fractures, are tiny fractures of the bones, occurring when the forces placed on the bone is greater than the strength of the bone.

Micro-fractures often occur in a younger dog beginning its training because the greyhound's bones are still growing and hardening.

Micro-fractures are also common in greyhounds at their peak, that are training and racing frequently, particularly those dogs that race and train in circular facilities.

The forces applied to the bones while running around curves is greater than when greyhounds run in straight lines.

The stresses put on a greyhound's body in its day-to-day racing life can contribute

to micro-fractures. However, in some cases there may also be other underlying factors.

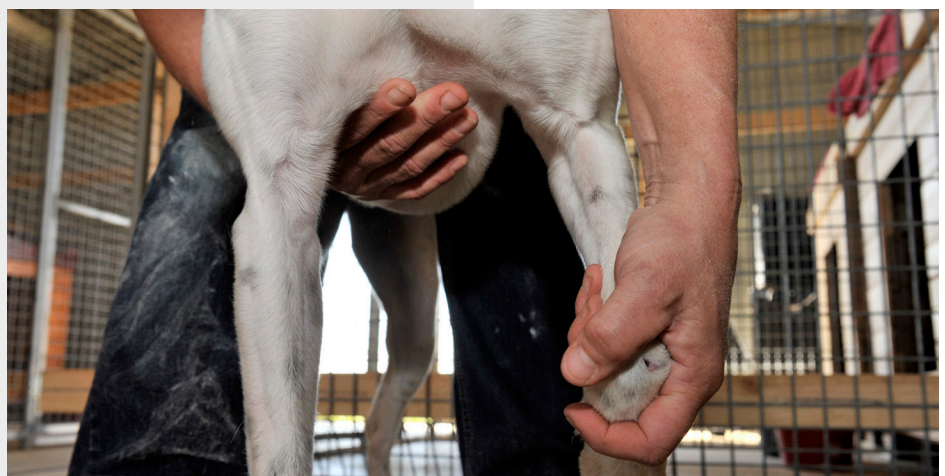
Common causes of micro-fractures include:

- training and/or racing on hard surfaces - increasing the force the bones are subjected to;
- training and/or racing too often - preventing the bone from having time to heal;
- high intensity training involving tight or multiple turns.

HOW WILL I KNOW IF MY GREYHOUND HAS A MICRO-FRACTURE?

Micro-fractures may go unnoticed initially, but generally present in a greyhound as:

- mild pain in the area of the fracture;
- mild lameness;
- heat in the affected limb;
- mild swelling;
- affected gait; and/or
- poor cornering.



Symptoms will vary between greyhounds, the location of the micro-fracture, and the number of micro-fractures a greyhound is suffering from. Some greyhounds will show all of these symptoms, while some show none.

The heat in your greyhound's leg could also indicate an infection and may require antibiotic treatment; or that the micro-fracture is in fact a large fracture that requires different treatment.

If you have concerns your greyhound may be suffering from micro-fractures, seek veterinary advice.

HOW ARE MICRO-FRACTURES TREATED?

Rest! Rest! Rest!

Bones can heal and strengthen given plenty of rest and providing the micro-fracture is very minor.

This means resting your greyhounds from their normal racing and training activities; in some cases, greyhounds may need periods of isolation to prevent them becoming excited and/or causing additional stress on the bone.

If the area of the micro-fracture is swollen or hot, you may want to apply icepacks to the affected area for 5-7 minutes, 3-4 times per day until the swelling and/or heat reduces. However, if you do not see an improvement within 24-48 hours, seek immediate veterinary attention.

WHEN SHOULD I SEEK VETERINARY ADVICE?

Your veterinarian will provide advice:

- on rest periods and when your greyhound is likely ready to resume training or racing;
- on medications and or treatments to support fracture healing;
- regarding a review of your greyhound's diet, exercise, training and racing regime to try and establish how the micro-fractures occurred and how to prevent them from occurring in the future; and
- on alternative exercise options (such as swimming) that will help you to keep your greyhound fit while they are healing.

Your veterinarian will also discuss with you the process of reintroduction to trialling, training or racing.

PREVENTING MICRO-FRACTURES

There are many things you can do to help prevent your greyhound developing micro-fractures including:

1. feed a nutritionally balanced diet that is appropriate to the age and activity level of your greyhound. For example, a puppy requires a different diet from an adult in full race training, as does a young dog learning to chase and beginning its racing career;
2. seek low impact exercise options for building and maintain your greyhound's fitness between races, while you are building a young greyhound's fitness, and for dogs recovering from injury, such as swimming;
3. have your training facilities assessed by a GRV track expert to determine whether your surface is too hard or too soft; and
4. Regular examination of your greyhounds for soundness and adaptation of training program if issues arise.



Always seek veterinary advice if you suspect your greyhound has a micro-fracture.

