



NUTRITION FACT SHEET



A sufficient and nutritionally balanced diet is essential for the maintenance of general health, body weight and performance of your greyhound. The traditional feeding of meat and cereal based foods has largely been replaced by dry foods specially formulated to meet the needs of racing dogs.



An inadequate diet can result in poor bone growth, an inability to maintain body condition, and a lack of capacity to repair in the face of stresses placed on the muscles and bones with exercise and racing.

There is now a significant choice and range of foods available these days with variable costs.

However, there remains considerable variation in the specific foods fed, partly based on scientific evidence, but still subject to the influences of tradition, folklore, and 'what works for me.' This is also the case with supplements.

It is important that you regularly monitor body condition score and body weight to ensure that your feeding is adequate. Food intake required to maintain weight within the desired limit varies between greyhounds. No single feeding regime will work for all greyhounds.

Food requirements will also vary with developmental stages or environmental conditions.

For example:

- **cold weather** requires an increase in energy intake to maintain body temperature;
- **hot weather** requires an increase in energy intake because panting to cool down is an energy intensive process;
- **increased exercise** requires only small amounts of additional energy; and
- **pregnancy and lactation** have high demands on energy intakes with peak lactation (at around 3-weeks after whelping) demanding three times the normal energy intake.



Recording a greyhound's weight and condition is a good idea as it allows you to compare over time against a dog's diet, exercise, training program, and racing schedule.

It will give you a good idea of how the type and the quantity of food influences a particular greyhound's condition and performance.

Greyhounds derive their energy intake from the metabolism of not only of carbohydrates, but also protein and fat. Greyhounds also require 3-5% fibre in their diet for efficient digestion, coming primarily from dry food and vegetables.

A properly balanced diet results in the protein content being better utilised for the demands of muscle repair than energy production.

DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS

- While the feeding of a balanced diet should provide all the nutritional requirements for an individual, the demands of exercise together with the stresses of training, group housing, trialling and racing, as well as individual responses to those events, may cause the greyhound to develop deficiencies in nutrients, vitamins or electrolytes.
 - Consequently, supplements may be required. If you are not sure what an ingredient is for, it is strongly recommended that you discuss your choice of supplement with your veterinarian. Your veterinarian will be able to tell you whether the ingredient is necessary or if it could potentially be detrimental to your greyhound.
- It is important to remember that it is not appropriate to administer supplements without a suspected or identified need. Giving the wrong supplements or supplements in incorrect amounts can have negative health impacts; including kidney and liver damage. **Remember more is not better!**
 - You also need to be aware of the rules of racing that relate to the use of supplements, including cobalt (vitamin B12) and arsenic. Additional to these rules, the new Code of Practice for the Keeping of Racing Greyhounds will require all supplement feeding to be pre-approved by a veterinarian through an Establishment Health Management Plan.
 - If your greyhound is not performing to the level that you expect, a thorough check up by your veterinarians, including a blood profile, should be considered prior to trying to guess what is wrong and trying to fix it with supplements.



Some key things to remember when determining your greyhound's diet



- **excessive carbohydrates** may result in over storage of muscle glycogen resulting in a potential for increased lactic acid production during exercise, muscle fatigue, and possible acidosis.
- **excessive fat intake** can reduce palatability, although this does not appear to be an issue with most greyhounds.
- **excessive protein content** may result in reduced faecal bulk, and possibly diarrhoea. More importantly, good quality protein increases the daily cost of the diet and excessive amounts may be wasted as the excess is utilised as an energy substitute.
- **poor mineral content** in the diet, principally calcium, has the potential to reduce bone strength, and with this, expose the greyhound to more bone injuries, and poorer recovery from those injuries. Higher levels of calcium intake are required during growth but also during adaptation to racing stresses.

