



RECOGNISING ILLNESS AND INJURY OFF-TRACK

FACT SHEET



The signs of some of the illnesses and injuries that occur can be seen off-track



Further guidance on when to seek the assistance of a vet are provided in the fact sheets on the [General Treatment principles and when to get help](#)

This fact sheet expands on the [Signs of a Normal Healthy Greyhound](#) and [Signs That Something Is Not Quite Right With Your Greyhound](#) factsheets.

It is important to remember your responsibilities as a registered person. Under GAR 106 (1) (d) you must ensure that greyhounds, which are in the person's care or custody, are provided at all times with veterinary attention when necessary.

Remember, if you are in any doubt, always seek veterinary advice.

ILLNESS/INJURY

SIGNS

WORMS

- In young puppies, a severe worm (internal parasite) infestation can result in pain, reduced milk and food intake, and vomiting.
- In adults, a severe infestation can result in poor body condition, poor performance, diarrhoea or anaemia, and worms or segments of worms can be seen in faeces.
- Worms must be treated immediately with an appropriate anthelmintic (de-wormer) drug (liquid, tablet or chewable tablet). While these are available from supermarkets and pet food stores, [speak to your veterinarian about the best treatment options](#). You veterinarian may suggest you regularly change the active ingredient in the treatments you purchase to ensure they remain effective.

FLEAS

- Presence of fleas crawling on skin and through the coat.
- Presence of red-brown crumbly material (flea faeces) on the skin.
- Presence of red spots on the skin (flea bites).
- Fleas and other external parasites must be treated immediately. Again, while flea and tick treatments can be purchased from supermarkets and pet food stores, you should [speak to your veterinarian about the best treatment options](#).

MANGE (MITES)

- Commonly seen in young greyhounds but also in greyhounds under stress (commonly females feeding pups).
- Circular areas of hair thinning or baldness with a subtle scruffy / dandruff appearance to the bald area. The most common type is not usually itchy.
- Commonly found around the eyes ('spectacles' appearance) but also elsewhere on the body.
- Can be generalised and spread over the body, and can be complicated by bacterial skin infections, with weeping or bleeding sores and thickened skin.

<p>LAMENESS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lameness indicates the body is unable to place the usual amount of weight for the usual period during weight bearing, due to injury and the resultant pain. • Limping is present and may be due to a significant injury. • Lameness and swelling may be due to infection, fractures or dislocation. • Infection will usually have fever (temperature greater than 39.0°C) and there may be pain on touching the affected limb accompanying the swelling and lameness. • A fracture usually has swelling, pain and lameness but not fever.
<p>DISLOCATIONS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lameness, variable swelling, abnormal angulation to the affected joint and variable pain on touching the area.
<p>FRACTURES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lameness, variable swelling, abnormal angulation to the affected joint, and variable pain on touching of the area. • There is often a grating feel. This is caused by bone fragments rubbing against one another. • Common fractures in young dogs involve growth plates (especially the tibial crest on the top front aspect of the tibia just below the stifle/knee) and toes. • Recurrent lameness in the hind or front leg of a young dog could be due to a condition called Osteochondritis dissecans (OCD), which occurs when diseased cartilage separates from the bone. It most commonly affects the shoulder but also the elbow, hip or stifle/knee.
<p>GASTRO-ENTERITIS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variable degrees of vomiting and diarrhoea. • Reduced appetite or stopping eating. • Diarrhoea may vary from slightly softer than usual to cow-pat consistency to very watery fluid diarrhoea.
<p>SKIN WOUNDS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partial thickness skin loss (abrasions) usually present as a red-dened area of skin, with hair loss and possibly small amounts of blood on top. • Full thickness wounds (lacerations) can be of variable size and shape. They can be straight lines, curved lines, skin flaps, large areas of skin torn sharply or irregularly, with variable amounts of tissue visible underneath and variable damage to those tissues. • There will be variable amounts of bleeding and there can be variable amounts of contamination of the area with organic matter (such as dirt, sand, gravel and grass). Wounds caused by wire, glass, branches or any other sharp object may contain fragments of the material that caused the laceration. • If the greyhound's pad is penetrated by glass, gravel or sharp stones, there may be lameness, predominantly when walking on hard rough or uneven surfaces, together with a small cut or mark in the pad. • Split webbing is a tear of the skin between the toes. It can be a minor cut or a major tear. • A laceration may occur in the middle of the webbing or be more complicated affecting the skin over the toe(s) either side of the laceration and skin adjacent to the foot pads. • 'Sand burns' (abrasions or full thickness lacerations) may occur and present as red weeping lines through to a complete laceration. They are usually located under one or both central toes of either one or both hind feet. • Chronic sand burns present as thickened skin either side of the central laceration and may extend just under the toe or travel further up the paw alongside the metatarsal pad.

INFECTION

- The signs of infection can vary significantly.
- May be observed as anything from small pustules on the inner thighs through to 'hot spots' (superficial bacterial infections of the skin) that cause hair loss and develop a scab or crust over a red, weeping area of skin.
- Infection can also be observed as severe cellulitis with severe swelling of the affected area, skin death and marked skin loss (commonly following a dog bite wound).
- Coughing is commonly associated with upper respiratory tract infection ('Kennel Cough' or 'Canine Cough').
- A rapid respiratory rate or grunting with increased breathing effort may be the result of pneumonia (lung infection).
- Vomiting and/or diarrhoea may result from infection of the gastro-intestinal tract.
- Discharge from the vulva may be due to infection of the female reproductive tract.
- Yellow pus at the opening of a dog's sheath (penis) may be indicative of balanitis (sheath infection).
- Increased water intake and/or frequent urination may be the result of infection of the urinary tract or a sign of water diabetes syndrome.

If your greyhound is showing any of the above signs veterinary assessment should be sought.

BITE WOUNDS

- If you hear an altercation between greyhounds housed or being exercised together you have an obligation to investigate to check on the greyhounds' welfare.
- Dog fight wounds may initially appear minor or may be immediately obvious as severe wounds with significant skin damage.
- Any damage to structures under the skin may be difficult to see, so greyhounds should be thoroughly examined if you suspect they have been fighting.
- All dog fight wounds should be evaluated thoroughly. *Veterinary assessment should be sought.* This is especially the case if there is obvious damage to muscles under the skin, or if lameness occurs after the fight.
- Many dog fight wounds become infected. In some cases, the traumatic pulling of the skin can damage the blood supply to this area of skin causing it to die back over the ensuing following days.

EYE CONDITIONS

- Yellowish eye discharge is indicative of infection.
- White mucus discharge usually results from excessively dusty or windy environments.
- Squinting is a sign of eye pain.
- Red eyes are an indication of eye inflammation or irritation (may be an early stage of the disease Pannus).
- Prominent blood vessels extending onto the surface of the eye are commonly noticed with Pannus.
- Dilated, poorly responsive pupils in dogs 15-26 months of age with corresponding poor race form at night can be associated with the genetic degenerative disease known as Progressive Retinal Atrophy.

DENTAL DISEASE

- Bad breath, a buildup of yellow, brown or tan chunks of concremented material (calculus/tartar) on the teeth, gum redness or recession, tooth root exposure or loose, and fractured or displaced teeth.