



SIGNS OF AN UNHEALTHY GREYHOUND FACT SHEET



Greyhounds are exposed to exercise and situations where illness and injury can occur. Some of these injuries or illnesses can be mild or not even apparent. Mild injuries or illnesses, if left untreated or inappropriately treated, may progress to become more complex and serious.



As someone working directly with a greyhound, you are well placed to detect changes in the greyhound that may indicate a problem. Some of the characteristics that may indicate that something is not quite right are detailed below.

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.

ATTRIBUTE	MAY NOT BE QUITE RIGHT
BODY CONDITION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of muscle mass, either overall or in one limb relative to the opposite limb. Soft muscle tone. Progressive weight gain or loss. Poor growth rate.
WEIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unexpected weight gain or loss. Unsteady or fluctuating weight.
APPETITE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced or variable appetite. Change in the way the greyhound eats. Dropping food from its mouth. Struggling to swallow food.
DRINKING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any change in its drinking habit. Drinking more than usual which may or may not be associated with a recent run, trial or race.
URINATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent urination or a change in urination habits. Straining to urinate. Slow to start urination after having adopted the posture to urinate - in males a pulsating, fine stream. Blood in the urine.
DEFAECATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Straining, or failing to defaecate. Bleeding associated with defaecation and seen in the greyhound's stool. Changes in the appearance, consistency or colour (especially if it becomes black) of its stools. Diarrhoea (dietary, food sensitivity, toxin related, bacterial, viral infection or parasite infestation). The presence of worms, worm fragments or undigested foods in its stools. The presence of mucus on the outside of stools.

SIGNS THAT SOMETHING IS NOT QUITE RIGHT WITH YOUR GREYHOUND

SKIN

- A dull coat lacking lustre with reduced sheen.
- Flaky skin.
- Hair loss, including; Overall thinning or Patchy hair loss
- Sore or weeping skin
- Prolonged skin 'tenting' when lifted. Tented skin is a sign of dehydration.
- Presence of external parasites (fleas/ticks).
- Pressure sores.
- Grazes and lacerations.
- Bite wounds.
- Skin growths such as skin tumours or papillomas.
- Grass seeds.

EYES

- Cloudy eyes.
- Reddened eyes.
- Squinting.
- Increased blinking, especially if involving one eye.
- Changes to the surface of the cornea in the eye (such as bluish-white hue, blood vessel infiltration, pigmentation or white patches).
- Presence of blood within the eye.
- Swollen or inflamed or crusty eyelid(s).
- Hair loss around the eye(s).
- Eyes that are highly reflective at night.

EARS

- Ear(s) painful to the touch.
- Reddened ear flap(s) or ear canals.
- Discharge from the ear canal(s).
- Blood coming from the ear canal(s).
- Crusty or bleeding edges of the ear flap(s).
- Abrasions/lacerations/bite wounds to the ear flaps.

MOUTH

- Pain when examining or opening the mouth.
- Abrasions, lacerations or swelling.
- Bite wounds to the lips.
- Tooth wear or crown fractures.
- Tartar and calculus accumulation on the teeth.
- Rotten teeth.
- Gum redness or receding gums.
- Lacerations within the mouth.
- Sores on the roof of the mouth.
- Tongue lacerations or tongue trauma (bite wounds).
- Blood in the mouth.
- Drooling excessively.

RESPONSIVENESS

- Any change from the 'normal' responsiveness of the greyhound.
- Dullness or sluggishness.
- Soreness/stiffness when standing up or lying down.
- Reluctance to get up onto/get down from bed or reluctance to exercise.

GAIT (MOVEMENT)

- Stiffness when moving.
- Dragging or scuffing toes when walking.
- Any lameness, from mild through to non-weight-bearing.
- Failing to stretch out when running.
- Running wide, shortening stride, or slowing down, especially on turns in a racing or training setting.
- Lameness on different surfaces, especially rough uneven ground.
- Lifting one or more feet off ground temporarily after running.
- Lameness off track or once cooled down.
- Shortening stride while racing, either suddenly or towards end of run.
- Vocalising or crying out while running.
- A bunny-hopping gait.
- Recurring lameness with exercise.

BODY TEMPERATURE

- An elevated temperature (greater than 39.5°C) when not exercised or excited (externally a coat may appear rough or fluffed up).
- A hot limb or area of the body can indicate infection or inflammation.
- An elevated temperature associated with exercise should return to normal quickly; but prolonged elevation can lead to heat stress, heat stroke, and possible death.
- Ear flaps and abdominal/flank skin are hot.
- Ear flaps are usually cool to touch and provide a good indicator for further temperature assessment.
- The abdominal/flank region is usually faintly warm. You should know how warm this area usually is as it can provide an indirect indicator for further temperature assessment if unusually hot.
- An elevated temperature may be accompanied by panting (a greyhound's method for attempting to cool down).
- A prolonged elevated temperature can lead to internal organ failure.

RESPIRATORY RATE

- Resting respiratory rates are always less than 30 breaths per minute (usually around 20-24 breaths per minute).
- Rapid panting post-race/post-exercise should reduce to normal within a reasonable period (usually 20-45 minutes). This can vary depending on the degree of confinement, ambient temperature, humidity, and any external excitement causing stimuli.
- A prolonged increased respiratory rate indicates stress, anxiousness, heat stress or an elevated temperature.