



VET EXAMINATION FACT SHEET



The object of any examination of a greyhound is to find any injury or condition which can negatively affect its welfare and racing performance. There is no single right way to examine a dog for injury.



A greyhound can suffer any of the diseases or conditions that may affect any other breed of dog. However, due to selective breeding, athletic training and racing, the greyhound is also particularly susceptible to a large range of other conditions that are rarely seen in other breeds.

Males tend to suffer more severe injuries than females because of their heavier weight, higher momentum and in some instances more awkward galloping action.

The clinical examination of the greyhound must cover all aspects of the greyhound's health, wellbeing and physical integrity. There are several key elements that form part of a veterinary examination.



CLINICAL HISTORY AND PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

The examination of a greyhound begins as soon as it enters the consultation room. Your veterinarian will watch the way the dog walks, looking for lameness, swelling and general physical condition, breathing rate and alertness.

The purpose of the physical examination is to carefully work through every part of the body for signs of an injury or illness. However, an accurate clinical history is important in assessing a greyhound's performance potential and determining if it has any injuries.

The changes to a greyhound's performance (such as running off on turns, tiring badly after 300m or throwing one or the other hindlegs) provide valuable clues to the potential type and severity of injury that the dog may have sustained.

A participant who is regularly interacting with a greyhound will know what is 'normal' for that greyhound.



It is important to be aware of how the greyhound walks, trots and gallops, and its normal behaviour when it is well and uninjured.

This helps your veterinarian identify any changes that may indicate an injury or illness.

The following information is important in assessing your greyhound's condition and you should be willing to volunteer the information to your veterinarian when you present your greyhound for examination:

- the **age** and **breeding lines** of the greyhound;
 - the **vaccination** and **parasite prevention program** being used for the dog. It is important that the greyhound has maintained a full **C5 vaccination, heartworm prevention medication** (remember that heartworm is present in Victoria and is here to stay), **worm control** (for all types of worms) and **external parasite (e.g. flea) control**.
 - the greyhound's **rearing environment**. Greyhounds that have been isolated and reared in a family's backyard may lack the ability to gallop properly and may have problems associating with other dogs (or other animals) if they have not been properly socialised. Greyhounds reared on a farm may not readily associate with humans, and this may cause difficulties when racing on a track with a large crowd in attendance. Environmental stimulation and enrichment are essential for rearing emotionally well-rounded individuals suitable for training, racing and for re-homing at the end of their racing career.
- It is important to consider whether the greyhound has been fed adequately during the rearing period, especially with respect to calcium supplementation as inadequate or unbalanced nutrition may predispose the greyhound to injuries.

Refer to GRV Fact Sheet Early Education – Improving Your Chances of Racing Success.

- the **education and training** of the greyhound may provide clues to the greyhound's performance or changes to that performance.

Some of the questions that may be asked include;

- has the greyhound been educated / broken-in?
- did it educate / break-in easily, or were there any problems with the breaking in program?
- has the greyhound shown ability?
- has it been running well solo and in fields?
- does it run better during the day than at night?
- does the dog slow early, tire towards the end of the run or is it slow all the way?

Feeding:

- is the greyhound being fed well?
- what is it being fed and how much?
- is there enough fat in the diet?
- is there enough calcium supplementation in the diet?
- has the greyhound been assessed for adequate potassium and magnesium levels?
- what supplements do you feed routinely, pre-race and post-race?

All these types of questions may be asked by your veterinarian.

This will assist your veterinarian in arriving at an accurate assessment of what is wrong or right with the greyhound and what can be done to improve its condition and performance - even before the dog has been touched!



From the outset, it is important to remember that not everything can be done for the greyhound. No one can make a slow greyhound run faster than it is possible for it to run.

Some of the injuries sustained by a greyhound during its development or racing career may so severely affect the greyhound's performance capabilities that it will not be able to continue a racing career.