



# WATER DIABETES FACT SHEET

Water Diabetes (WD) occurs rarely in dogs but is particularly common amongst greyhounds.



It includes a number of conditions that present themselves with excessive fluid intake and urination (polyuria/polydipsia) such as Diabetes Insipidus.

*Severe cases can be fatal without prompt diagnosis and treatment. Generally speaking, Water diabetes is a metabolic disorder in which the kidneys are not able to reabsorb normal amounts of water.*

It is thought to be linked to the insufficient production (or release) of Anti-Diuretic Hormone (ADH) from the Pituitary Gland in the brain.

Whilst WD can be congenital, other factors that can cause the disease include trauma, bacterial or viral infection, neoplasia, some medications for treating chronic injuries, and most commonly, stress.

## SYMPTOMS

Water Diabetes is classified by the severity and onset of symptoms; hyperacute, acute and chronic:

### In hyperacute cases;

- rapid onset, often occurring within 1 - 5 minutes of race/trial;
- drinking (and often vomiting) up to 15 litres of water within the first hour;
- become dehydrated;
- rapid loss of appetite and weight;

death can occur within 24 - 48 hours without prompt treatment.

### In acute cases;

- still rapid onset, occurring within 24 hours of race/trial;

- drinking 2 - 10 litres of water a day;
- become dehydrated and lose weight but appetite is generally normal;
- death possible without treatment;

it has a good prognosis with successful treatment.

### In chronic cases;

- slower onset, occurring within 3 - 4 days of race/trial;
- drinking 1 - 2 litres of water a day;
- mild dehydration and associated weight fluctuation, appetite normal;

it has a good prognosis good prognosis with successful treatment and removal of causes.



## CAUSES

An underlying theme common to all forms of WD is stress. Common factors that cause stress in greyhounds include:

- **Diseases** - parasites or injuries;
- **Social Factors** - competition, sounds, smell, kennelling;
- **Dietary Factors** - imbalances, excesses and deficiencies;
- **Climatic Factors** - temperature, humidity, poor ventilation;
- **Training/Racing Programmes** (including travel) - a schedule that is too frequent or one that is more than what the greyhound is suited to.

## WHEN SHOULD I SEEK VETERINARY ADVICE?

*Treatment will depend on the severity of the symptoms and the ability to identify the stress factors that triggered the WD.*



Your veterinarian will be able to give you a treatment and prevention plan that may include:

- **Stress reduction;**
- **Replacement ADH (Injections, nasal sprays or drops);**
- **Intravenous fluids (I/V drip);**
- **Mineralocorticoids (injections or tablets);**
- **Controlled fluid intake;**
- **Modified training/racing programme;**
- **Diet modification;**
- **Supplements e.g. potassium or other electrolytes;**
- **Isolation/confinement to a quiet environment.**

