



## 1.0 SKIN WOUNDS

Skin wounds include grazes and various degrees of cuts or lacerations, resulting from racing and trialling accidents, paddock or run collisions, or fight wounds.

### HOW DO SKIN WOUNDS OCCUR?

On-track, they most commonly occur when there is interference between two or more greyhounds, commonly caused by the other dog's toenails hitting the skin and tearing it.

Wounds can also occur when a greyhound hits the rail or other equipment when running on the track or at home, for example, when they hit a sharp object such as a nail, wire, loose piece of fencing, or even the edge of their kennel.

Fights between greyhounds can also result in significant skin wounds because of their thin skin. You need to be particularly

careful of seemingly minor skin wounds from fighting, as there can also be muscle damage under the skin which cannot be seen or easily assessed.

### WHAT IS THE TREATMENT FOR SKIN WOUNDS?

The location, size and depth of the wound, and amount of bleeding will guide you to provide appropriate care for your greyhound. Some rules of thumb include:

*Small cuts and 'nicks' of less than 5-10mm (0.5-1cm) in length with minimal bleeding can usually be treated at home without stitching.*

If your greyhound suffers a small cut:

- clean the affected area with warm salty water, patting the wound dry with a clean cloth; then
- apply an antiseptic solution

or cream (check with your veterinarian for the most appropriate solution/cream to keep in your first aid kit); then

- place a small sterile gauze square from your first aid kit (this may be cut down to shape or size of the wound) over the wound and bandage to hold the gauze in place to prevent the wound from becoming dirty. The bandage will also hold the edges of the skin together to help with healing.



**The bandage should be changed daily until the wound has scabbed over.**

**If the wound does not scab over completely within 1-3 days of initial treatment you must seek veterinary help as the wound may have been deeper than you initially thought, and your veterinarian may need to stitch it to help it close.**

If the wound begins to swell, becomes swollen, painful or hot, or begins to show signs of discharge, contact your veterinarian immediately. The wound may be becoming infected and your greyhound may need antibiotics.

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*Larger wounds that are greater than 10mm (1cm), that look deep (into underlying tissue) or wounds with accompanying lameness, swelling, pain or sensitivity when it is touched should be seen by a veterinarian as there may well be additional injury in or around the site.*

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With any large wound, the area should be carefully cleaned with warm salty water, dried with sterile gauze or a clean cloth, covered in a gauze dressing, and bandaged to minimise ongoing bleeding and possible contamination from soil or the environment. Then you should transport your greyhound as soon as possible to your veterinarian.

Most of these types of wounds require stitches to maximise the healing and minimising any downtime for the greyhound.

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*It is not acceptable to leave wounds we would classify as large or deep without veterinary examination and treatment or delay the veterinary examination.*

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*All dog fight and dog bite wounds should receive veterinary attention immediately. Many of these wounds involve deeper structures and can be very quickly further compromised by swelling and infection.*

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## 1.1 TRACKLEG

Trackleg is the common name for swelling on the inside of the tibia (main hindleg bone between knee and hock). In most cases it occurs on the left leg, is less common in the right leg and, in rare cases, will occur on both legs.



### WHAT IS THE CAUSE OF TRACKLEG?

It is caused by the outer point of the elbow colliding with the inside of the tibia as the greyhound runs and is most common with circle racing. Most commonly it is due to an injury or running style that has the elbow turning out or the hindleg inadequately arcing around the elbow.

### HOW CAN TRACKLEG BE TREATED?

Trackleg ranges in seriousness from mild to moderate to severe and the treatment varies accordingly.

*Mild trackleg* is described as a little puffiness to the touch after one or two glancing blows during a run

- If you notice minor swelling, treat your greyhound's leg with an ice-pack held in place for 5-7 minutes, 3-4 times

daily, together with magnetic field therapy (on low settings) until the swelling subsides.

- It is important that you consult your veterinarian if you are unsure of the severity or treatment options, or do not have access to magnetic field therapy.

*Moderate trackleg* shows more significant and obvious swelling and subsequent thickening and scarring. Treatment of moderate trackleg requires a veterinarian who will assess your greyhound. The most common treatment is:

- Draining of the fluid and then treatment to reduce thickening and ongoing fluid build-up; for example, by injecting the site with an anti-inflammatory and bandaging the site for 1-2 days.
- Skin application of anti-inflammatory preparations after the bandages are removed.
- Remember to check the with-holding requirements of any medication(s) that you use, or your veterinarian dispenses.

*Severe trackleg* presents as a break or rupture of the skin with bleeding and ongoing oozing from the site.

*Treatment of severe trackleg must be undertaken by a veterinarian. However, for any wound you should offer initial wound first aid, as described earlier, until you can get veterinary help.*

- In all cases, treatment also involves attempting to identify and correct the cause for the gait leading to the development of the trackleg.



## HOW CAN I ASSIST MY GREYHOUND FROM SUFFERING CONTINUOUS TRACKLEG INJURIES?

To minimise ongoing or repeat damage/trauma to the area during racing, a 'track-leg' tape can be applied. This tape, usually a 50mm or 75mm elastoplast strapping, often with some form of padding placed over the site under the bandage, is applied over the area before trials and races. A GRV Steward must endorse the application of tape prior to racing and record the approval in your greyhound's weight card and on FastTrack.

### 1.2 SANDTOE

Traumatic inflammation and/or infection of the nail bed is often known as a "sandtoe" and is caused by nails and toes digging into the sand while running.

### HOW WILL I KNOW IF MY GREYHOUND HAS "SANDTOE"?

Nail beds become swollen, reddened and may bleed or show some other type of discharge. They become sensitive to touch (dog may pull back from the toe being touched or may cry out when the nail bed is gently squeezed). Occasionally the skin around the nailbed may split and flare outwardly.



## HOW CAN I TREAT SANDTOE?

If sandtoe occurs, then you should:

- gently clean the area with an antiseptic solution, wiping in a direction down the nail away from the nailbed. Soft tooth brushes can be used, being mindful to not inflict additional trauma to the affected area;
- after cleaning, antiseptic creams can be applied. If using anti-inflammatory creams, be mindful of drug withdrawal times.

*If you are unsure, seek help from your veterinarian. If the inflammation or infection does not start to heal within 2-3 days of applying first-aid, then seek immediate help from your veterinarian.*

To protect the nail bed from becoming sore again, several layers of a 2-3mm wide tape are placed around the nail close to the nail bed to act as a sand-deflector. When placing the tape, ensure that the nail is clean, dry and free from any oily cream to ensure that the tape sticks to the nail.

### 1.3 SANDBURN



Sandburn is an abrasion or cut on the skin of the feet, which

is evident when the toes are spread. It is often caused due to weak flexor tendons leading to overspread toes during exercise, which allows the foot to have direct contact to the sand causing friction between the sand and foot.

## WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF SANDBURN?

If your greyhound is suffering from sandburn, you may notice these things on its foot:

- redness
- swelling
- burns
- cuts
- soreness upon contact

## HOW IS SANDBURN TREATED?

Sandburn treatment is similar to that of sandtoe. You should treat sandburn as follows:

- small cuts and burns require cleaning and treatment to avoid infection using an antiseptic solution. As with sandtoe, a soft method of cleaning and treatment is preferred here to avoid any further trauma to the sensitive area.
- large/deep cuts should be observed by a veterinarian for advice on what the most appropriate treatment option is to manage the injury.

*If the sandburn is not healing within 2-3 days after your treatment, then seek advice from a veterinarian for further assistance.*

Strengthening the flexor tendons of the foot can be a good mechanism to aid in prevention of sandburn as it will lessen the likelihood and ease of toe spread during exercise and exposure to the sand. This can be done through plenty of physical massage.

## 1.4 HAPPY TAIL



### WHY DOES 'HAPPY TAIL' OCCUR?

'Happy Tail' or tail tip trauma typically occurs in those greyhounds that frequently wag their tail in a confined space (e.g. a kennel wall or trailer compartment).

The constant beating of the tail against a hard surface will eventually result in damage to the skin around the tail tip, often with a laceration (cut). Damage to the last 10cm of the tail will usually result in a lot of bleeding, splattering blood around the area.

If the tail tip is constantly swollen from the damage, especially if the bone becomes damaged as well, the blood supply may be reduced, slowing the healing. The repeated trauma of the tail tip makes managing this condition difficult unless you take necessary measures to protect the tail and/or can remove surfaces on which it could hurt itself.

### WHAT DO I DO WHEN I SEE 'HAPPY TAIL' ON MY GREYHOUND?

The first step is to ensure the greyhound does not continue to hit its tail against hard surfaces. Either relocate the dog to a wider space or if possible remove/protect the hard surface(s).

Next, ensure that you inspect the tail to identify the severity of the damage and bleeding. If the bleeding is slow, the cut is small, and the greyhound does not express discomfort when the area is inspected, then provide basic first aid.

### HOW CAN I TREAT 'HAPPY TAIL'?

#### Basic tail tip trauma first aid:

- Safely clip any hair within 1cm of the wound with clippers or scissors.
- Ensure the wound is flushed with sterile, warm saline (refer to [First Aid Kit FAQ Sheet](#) for process to make your own saline solution) to remove any possible contamination such as dirt or other debris. You may then apply an appropriate disinfectant to the site such as Povidone Iodine.
- Once the wound is dry, apply a non-adherent dressing ensuring you cover the cut. Do not apply adhesive tape directly to the injury as this will cause trauma to the site when removed and may also delay healing.
- Wrap the dressing lightly with a second layer of soft, comfortable bandaging. This will ensure the dressing is kept against the wound, provides absorption in case of continued bleeding/oozing and cushions any trauma.
- Finally, apply an elastic self-adherent layer to hold the bandaging. Apply 1/3 of this layer above the second layer so that it is securely attached to the greyhound's tail hair. Ensure this is not applied tightly to avoid accidentally cutting off the blood flow to the tail tip.

- Check the bandaging at least twice daily for any signs of blood saturation or discomfort. The bandage should be removed to inspect the cut at least every 48 hours.



### HOW CAN I PREVENT 'HAPPY TAIL' FROM OCCURRING?

Some of these suggestions may be useful if you believe your greyhound is at risk of 'happy tail' or s/he has a history of trauma:

Ensure the greyhound has plenty of space, so as to decrease the chance of hitting the tail against a hard surface or object. For example, opt for a wider kennel.

If your greyhound usually gets excited when s/he sees you, then get in the habit (training) of staying calm on initial approach or interaction until you get to a larger space.

In those instances where a larger space is not possible (for example, during transport), temporarily wrap the tail with soft padding such as a pool noodle split in half and slightly hollowed out, a hair roller or the plastic insert from a roll of track leg tape.

If the greyhound is prone to re-injuring the tail on race day, place a light bandage on the tail tip before kenneling.

If the trauma is small, then addressing it early will help prevent a much larger or complicated problem.

