

GREYHOUND RACING

VICTORIA

Attending and Training Greyhounds

Booklet 7 – Setting Up an Optimal Training Environment



Greyhound Racing Victoria
Attendant and Trainer Education Pack

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This is the seventh in a series of booklets that support you in attending and training racing greyhounds.

Booklet 1: Introduction

Booklet 2: Greyhound Basics

Booklet 3: At the Race Track - Kennelling, Preparing for Racing, Boxing and Catching

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The kennel environment and management

7.1 Code of Practice

What is a Code of Practice?

In Victoria, there are a number of different pieces of legislation that apply to the keeping of animals; such as, the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (DAA) and the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986* (POCTAA). A copy of these Acts can be found at:

<http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>.

Under these Acts there is the provision to make 'Codes of Practice'. These codes reflect the views and values held by Victorians with respect to the care of animals. The codes provide a written 'minimum standard' for accommodation, management and care of animals in certain situations.

The original greyhound Code of Practice, which was adopted as a set of minimum standards by GRV several years ago, is being replaced by a new *Code of Practice for the Keeping of Racing Greyhounds* which will commence on 1 January 2020. This "new Code" can be found at: <http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/pets/dogs/greyhounds/code-of-practice>.

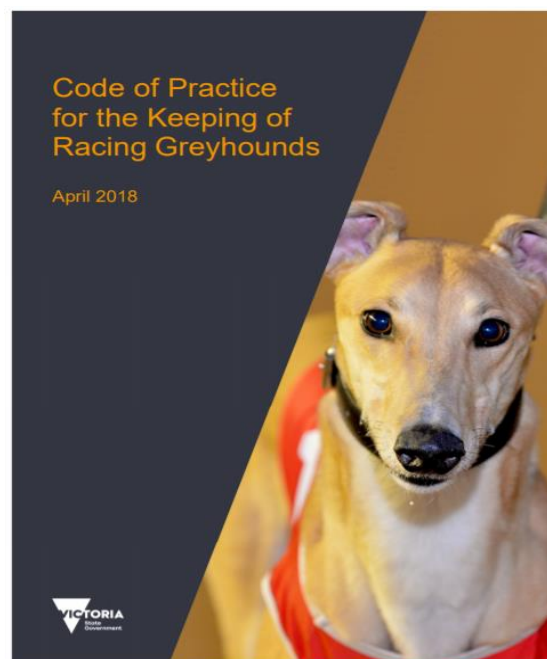
The new Code sets out the minimum accepted standards for participants in the greyhound industry and you are expected to meet these standards. It is an important document that you must comply with and covers a range of areas

including:

- staffing requirements;
- operation of a greyhound establishment;
- record keeping;
- nutrition;
- health care;
- exercise;
- setting up and managing a facility;
- the sale and transfer of greyhounds.

The new Code also addresses breeding, training, enrichment and socialisation, and handling. It considers the whole greyhound lifecycle and highlights the importance of keeping good records. These records relate to both the operation of the establishment and the greyhounds themselves and include comprehensive health care and veterinary histories.

At this point, please go to the website and download the Code of Practice and read through it before continuing with the training.



7.2 Setting up and maintaining a good kennel environment

When designing and building your kennels, any materials you use should be selected for ease of maintenance and cleaning, durability and non-toxicity. After all, they are going to be subjected to daily cleaning (as a minimum). There will be exposure to detergents and disinfectants along with water when they are 'hosed out'.

Your greyhounds will need to be protected from the weather – heat, cold, wind and rain. Ventilation must be adequate to keep greyhound housing areas free of dampness, noxious odours and draughts. Your facility must also be well lit and provide for natural lighting during the day.

All race kennels must be a minimum of 3 square metres in size.

New kennel facilities

All new kennel facilities are expected to meet the minimum standards outlined in the new Code. The housing standards in the new Code commencing 1 January 2020 are higher than those in the existing Code and it is recommended that you build any new facilities to the standards required in the new Code.

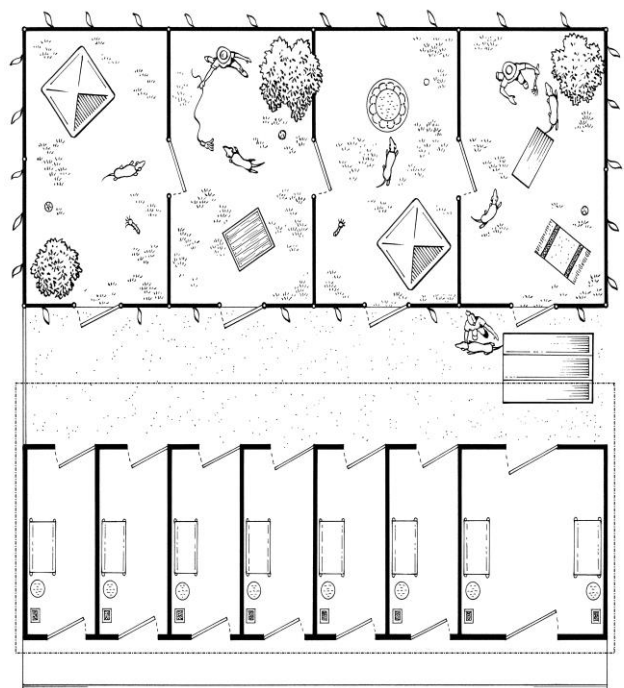
Whether you are setting up a facility to house one or two greyhounds in the backyard of a suburban house, or whether you are planning to develop a larger greyhound kennel with training and/or breeding facilities, you need to consult the new Code to ensure that any kennels, yards, and pens meet the minimum space

and fencing requirements.

In addition, you will also be expected to comply with any local government requirements in your area. This includes the new planning guidelines for greyhound facilities across Victoria, developed under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. The requirements can be viewed at

<https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/planning-reform/new-planning-guidelines-for-greyhound-facilities-across-victoria>.

Requirements for applicants, to keep racing greyhounds and use and develop land for a racing greyhound facility, are set out for new facilities or expanding an existing facility. A facility with an existing permit may continue to operate in accordance with the permit without having to obtain a new permit or comply with the new requirements.



It is important to review and understand the planning guidelines. If you meet all the approved measures, your application

MUST be approved by your local council. So, before you begin building or setting up your facilities, make sure your plans/kennel design will meet all the approved measures.

Extensions to existing facilities

If you already have a greyhound facility, and plan to extend or modify it, then your extension will also be expected to comply with the recommended minimums laid out in the new Code.

Lighting and security

It is essential that your kennel facility lets in natural light during the day; and it is a requirement of the new Code. Natural light is important for your greyhound's wellbeing, and internal body clock and the regulation of essential hormones.

It is also important that your facility is well lit for the benefit of people moving around it. Paths and walkways should be lit, along with the interior of your kennels, so that every greyhound can be seen. Make sure that all electrical wiring is safely away from wet areas and the reach of your greyhounds.

Your kennel facility needs to be maintained in a secure state, both to prevent your greyhounds from escaping, and to prevent unauthorised people gaining access to your kennels. It is essential that greyhounds, while unsupervised are safe from attack, stress or injury from other greyhounds, animals or people.

Maintenance of fences and gates is important, especially those that form the boundary of your property, to ensure your greyhounds are safe. There must be two barriers between your greyhound and

escape, and the kennel area must be able to be securely locked to prevent unauthorised entry. Each kennel or run must be fitted with a secure closing device that cannot be opened by the greyhounds.

Maintenance

Once your setup is established it is important to continue to look after the facility so that it remains safe and secure. The kennelling area needs to provide a restful and comfortable environment for your greyhounds.



All structures and fencing needs to be maintained, painted and/or repaired as required to maintain the visual aesthetics of the facility. Attending to minor problems will ensure that your greyhounds do not injure themselves or become affected by less than ideal conditions, well before issues become major ones.

Every day you should be inspecting your fences, kennels and runs for signs of damage. Sharp edges, or protruding wire can easily cut or tear a greyhound's skin, especially if they are running around the yard at speed. Outdoor runs should be inspected for holes and hazards, and these should be filled to prevent injuries.

Runs and kennels must be cleaned, and if needed hosed, scrubbed and/or

disinfected to maintain cleanliness. Bedding must be warm, dry and vermin resistant, and changed regularly to keep it clean. All bowls and utensils used for feeding greyhounds must be cleaned daily and should be disinfected to prevent disease transmission between dogs. Water bowls that do not spill, need to be cleaned and filled daily, or more often if needed, especially in hot weather.

Each kennel should be disinfected weekly, as well as whenever there is a change in the greyhound occupying a kennel. Remember, diseases such as Parvovirus and Kennel Cough can spread rapidly through a facility. Ensuring greyhound kennels are cleaned and disinfected regularly, and greyhounds are placed back in their own kennel after toileting/training/racing, minimises the risk of the spread of disease.

Under the new Code you will also need to make provision for isolation housing in the event that a greyhound is suspected of having an infectious disease. Alternatively, you must have a written agreement with a veterinary practitioner to use off-site isolation housing at a veterinary practice.

Any waste needs to be taken out and disposed of correctly so as not to attract flies or vermin. Food needs to be stored in such a way that vermin are not attracted to the facility, and if noted, dog-safe pest-control needs to be instituted and maintained.

Grass in and around your facility needs to be kept short, especially in rural areas where snakes can be a problem.

Remember: Stewards and Animal Welfare Inspectors can come and inspect your kennel facilities at any time.



7.3 Care and husbandry

It is important to note that more detailed information is available at GRV on its feeding, medication and supplement guidelines to assist trainers. This information and relevant links can be found at

<https://greyhoundcare.grv.org.au/health-and-well-being/feeding-medication-supplement-guidelines/>.

7.4 Feeding the racing greyhound

Nutrition

What you feed your greyhound will have a large influence on how it performs. Food provides the fuel for racing, along with supplying all of the essential protein, fat, carbohydrate, vitamins and minerals for the maintenance and repair of the body and its systems.

If the greyhound's diet is lacking in certain elements, the body may not be able to operate at its peak, in effect preventing the greyhound from racing well, and predisposing it to injury and illness. Conversely, over-feeding or over-

supplementing is just as detrimental and could have the same effect on performance, often with the added burden of having to remove the excess from the body putting unnecessary stress on certain organ systems. What you are aiming for is a 'nutritionally balanced' and 'complete' diet (all elements present in the right amounts with nothing missing).

Most of the research into nutrition has been done over a variety of dog breeds. It is well documented that the body has differing needs at different developmental stages such as during growth, pregnancy, lactation (feeding puppies), illness and old age. There has been some research into the specific requirements of the racing greyhound.

While many of the feeding regimes used by trainers rely somewhat on experience, it is important to discuss any dietary supplements with your veterinarian to ensure that your greyhound is receiving the *right* amount of essential and non-essential nutrients. Supplements given in the wrong amounts can have negative health impacts on the greyhound, including causing kidney and liver damage, and can even cause a positive swab.

Nutrition essentials

To function the body requires all of these:

Water

Greyhounds must have access to sufficient clean and fresh water at all times unless advised otherwise by a veterinary practitioner. The minimum daily water requirement is approximately 50 mL of water per kilogram of body weight (i.e. over 1 litre for a greyhound).



Protein

Protein in the diet is broken down by the digestive process into a variety of building blocks called 'amino acids'. Protein is needed for building, strengthening and repairing the body. It is thought that greyhounds need about 30% of their diet to be protein. Protein in the diet is generally derived from meat or meat products.



Carbohydrates (including fibre)

Carbohydrates provide energy to the body. They can be divided into 'simple' carbohydrates and 'complex' carbohydrates.

Simple carbohydrates require very little breaking down by the body and provide a short-term hit of energy. These simple carbohydrates are generally sugars or

starch.

Complex carbohydrates require processing by the body and provide for a longer-term release of energy. Complex carbohydrates are often derived from grains such as rice or oats. These also contain protein, vitamins and minerals, but are difficult for the body to access unless they have been well cooked, well soaked and fed soft. Complex carbohydrates also include fibre.

Fat

Fat is an important energy source for greyhounds and includes oils (which are just fats that are liquid at room temperature). Fats also assist in the absorption of some vitamins and are involved in the production of certain hormones. Fat is broken down into 'fatty acids' which are then absorbed. Animal fats such as those derived from meat and fish, tend to contain the best mix of fatty acids, but these rarely form the only fat source in a greyhound diet, with some fats being obtained from vegetable oils. Because fat is so important in the greyhound diet, sourcing meats with a high fat content is advisable, rather than using lean or 'diet' meats with the fat removed. Greyhounds have also been shown to run faster when dietary fat content was increased to 32%.

Vitamins

Vitamins are essential for the functioning of many body systems. The body can manufacture some of its own vitamins but is reliant on diet to supply the rest. Vitamins are involved in a variety of important functions such as growth, metabolism, tissue repair and the immune system. Deficiencies of certain vitamins can lead to serious problems and

will certainly affect performance.

Excessive amounts of vitamins, especially the fat-soluble vitamins A, D and E (such as that which occurs when over-supplementation occurs) can put stress on the kidneys and liver as the body tries to get rid of the excess or store it safely. **It can also lead to problems in most body systems - from joint pain and bone damage, to reduced muscle function.** **More is not better!**

Minerals and trace elements

These are dietary components that are needed in small amounts to ensure normal body function. Derived from the diet, they include things such as potassium, sodium, magnesium, calcium, phosphorus, copper, selenium, iron, iodine and zinc.

Minerals and trace elements may be deficient in some diets, especially those diets containing large amounts of meats (for example calcium). Some Australian soils are low in trace elements (for example selenium) so the animals that graze pasture do not ingest sufficient amounts. This is then reflected in the levels of these minerals found in their meat.

Getting the balance right

Some greyhound owners and trainers rely on commercially available 'premium' dog foods as the basis of their greyhounds' diet. These commercial foods are prepared in such a way so as to ensure all of the necessary levels of protein, fat, carbohydrate, vitamins and minerals are present in each meal. You can simply read the package to determine the levels of fat and protein that the food contains. Someone else has done all the

calculations to ensure that everything necessary is there.



It is possible to make up your own diet at home, but special care must be taken to ensure that the diet that you create is nutritionally balanced and complete. Mixing up this kind of diet also takes time and requires you to have adequate storage facilities for the various ingredients (such as a fridge or freezer for any meat). Ingredients need to be kept at the correct temperature to ensure that they do not spoil or become inactive. There is no point feeding spoiled or rotten food to your prize greyhound as you will be challenging its immune system. Nor is it a good idea to pour hot water onto a feed that contains an expensive supplement that becomes useless when exposed to high temperatures. If you are not sure whether the diet you are feeding is nutritionally balanced, it would pay to consult your greyhound veterinarian with a list of the ingredients and their amounts. The condition and weight of your greyhounds, along with the quality of their stools will also indicate how well your feeding regime is going. Sloppy or voluminous stools, poor coats, weight loss and lacklustre performance are all indicators of your diet's shortcomings.

How much do you feed your greyhound?

The amount of food required by a greyhound will be influenced by the time of year (increased requirements in the colder months), the amount of work, the individual greyhound's metabolism and activity level, and any stresses on the dog's body (such as injury, illness, or growth requirements). Each greyhound is an individual, and you will often find that two greyhounds, even from the same litter, will have quite different needs. It is your job to ensure that each greyhound gets the correct amount of food to maintain it in peak condition and at the correct weight.

A greyhound is only able to eat a certain volume of food in any one meal. So, increasing the amount of food offered at one time may not be the simple answer to your problems if your greyhound is down in condition. Options for feeding include dividing the daily food over a number of smaller meals; or changing the content of the food so that the energy level is either more or less concentrated depending on the needs of the greyhound.

Timing of the meals is also important, with the aim being to provide the maximum usable energy at the time the greyhound needs it most. You do not want to feed a greyhound just prior to it exercising as this diverts the blood supply to the gut rather than the muscles. Most greyhounds race on an empty stomach, although some trainers will feed a light meal a few hours before a race.



Remember that over-feeding is not healthy, as it leads to increased pressure on the body. Puppies that are overweight put a lot of stress on developing ligaments and joints. Having an overweight racing greyhound is a recipe for serious injury as the forces generated are multiplied by the added weight. The extra weight also slows the greyhound down.

Monitoring individual feeding programs

It is important that you are constantly monitoring your feeding program and making any necessary changes to ensure top condition. One way to do this is to weigh the greyhound weekly and assess its body condition. Using your hands to assess body condition also gives you the chance to evaluate the condition of the coat – is it soft and pliable, or dry and harsh?

Recording the greyhound's weight and condition regularly is a good idea, especially if you are just starting out. This can then be compared to written records of how much, and what type of food has been fed, the exercise and training program and the racing schedule and results. This will give you an excellent idea of how the type and quantity of food fed

influences the greyhound's condition and performances.

After race nutrition

After the strenuous activity involved in racing, it is important that you address the nutritional needs of the greyhound. Most greyhound veterinarians suggest that you provide your greyhound with some protein and carbohydrate, to replace that which has been lost, within 2-4 hours of a race.

You will also have to replace lost fluids, especially in the hotter months. Remember travel to and from the track can also cause fluid loss in the hot weather, so you will need to pay particular attention to your greyhound's hydration levels.

7.5 Additives and supplements

Importance of using supplements and additives with the diet

There are lots of different brands and types of supplements on the market, many specifically formulated for greyhounds in work. There are multi-vitamin and mineral supplements, electrolyte supplements and supplements containing essential fatty acids and amino acids.

The idea of using supplements is to overcome deficiencies within the diet that may be due to the way the food is processed, preserved and prepared. Sometimes there are also nutrient interactions that need to be overcome. The decision to supplement a greyhound's diet needs to be based on the greyhound's needs (stress, illness, activity

level and physical condition), the diet used, the ingredients in the supplement and the cost to benefit ratio. Many are not required in an otherwise healthy greyhound that is fed a balanced diet. You also need to be careful about how to use them and in what quantity and combination. You need to be very careful about what ingredients are in each supplement, as some contain products that may lead to a positive swab.

If you are not sure what an ingredient is for, it would be wise to discuss your choice of supplement with your veterinarian as they will be able to tell you whether the ingredient poses a concern or is necessary.

Using supplements

All supplements and injectable substances must be individually labelled and kept in their original container or packaging. It is very important that you follow the instructions on the label. This will tell you how much of the product to use and how often. It will also have storage instructions that need to be followed to ensure the product does not spoil or lose its potency.



Many supplement packages come with a measuring device, which you need to use to ensure the correct amount is used. Over-dosing a greyhound with any

supplement can be dangerous, and it is also a waste of money as the excess the body does not require is simply excreted.

Most supplements should be added to the diet just prior to feeding so that they do not interact with other food components and do not lose their potency.

Under the new Code, the use of any injectable substances must be administered under the direction of a veterinary practitioner.

All expired supplements and injectable substances must be disposed of according to relevant legislative requirements.

Multi-vitamin and mineral supplements

Feeding these types of balanced supplements will cover most of the greyhound's requirements if there is any deficiency in the rest of the diet. This means that you do not have to use multiple products to achieve the same effect. Trainers often try to use multiple supplements, when in many cases a complete dry food or a single, good quality multi-vitamin and mineral mix would cover all of the greyhound's needs. Beware of supplements that may contain cobalt or arsenic as they may cause a positive swab.

Electrolytes

Many dogs do not need electrolyte supplementation, and in fact supplementation with excessive electrolytes can lead to dehydration. The best way to detect any electrolyte deficiencies is with a blood test performed by your greyhound veterinarian. This will tell you which electrolytes, if any, are lacking and the product used can be

tailored to remedy the situation. Potassium is one electrolyte that is particularly important for normal muscle function.

Greyhounds with electrolyte imbalances or deficiencies tend to:

- have poor form;
- struggle in distance events;
- have increased respiratory distress after a run;
- have poor coats and hydration; and
- drink and urinate a lot after racing.

The treatment will depend on which electrolytes are missing – so speak to your veterinarian about the greyhound's blood results. It may be that you monitor the electrolyte levels repeatedly over time to see how well your electrolyte supplementation is working and modify your program accordingly.

Oil-based supplements

Sometimes the type of fat that is fed in diets is not the best source of the required fatty acids. Greyhounds with poor coats or skin conditions (other than flea infestation) can sometimes benefit from an oil-based supplement. Many trainers will simply use animal fat, but there are a number of commercial formulations that contain increased levels of omega 3 and omega 6 fatty acids. Like everything, the ratio of the fatty acids is more important than the quantity.

Other supplements

There are some very specific supplements that address specific nutritional deficits that may occasionally be warranted, and these include calcium, potassium, phosphorus and iron. It may be that supplementation is recommended after a blood test shows up a problem that is

linked to a deficiency of one of these elements, or they might be supplemented regularly, depending on the diet. It has been shown that over-doing calcium is just as dangerous to the developing skeleton as a deficiency, so remember to follow the dosage directions closely.

Calcium and phosphorus need to be given in the correct ratio to ensure the best result, especially in young, growing pups. Calcium needs to be supplemented along with phosphorus in a ratio that is similar to the calcium to phosphorus ratio in bone. These two elements are linked in their action, so too much of one without the other is detrimental. There are a number of supplements that contain calcium and phosphorus and the amount used will depend on what the rest of the greyhound's diet consists of – the more meat, the more supplement that is usually needed.

7.6 Use of medications

There are rules applying to the use of medications:

GAR 1 Definitions – ‘prohibited substance’ and ‘exempted substance’

GAR 79A Out of Competition Testing (‘permanently banned prohibited substances’)

GAR 83 Greyhound to be free of prohibited substances

GAR 83A Raceday treatment

GAR 84 Possession of prohibited substance

GAR 84A Treatment records to be kept

GAR 84B Possession on course

Regular information and alerts are published for participants on the GRV website FastTrack under the Stewards > General Alerts tabs.

As part of maintaining a complete health care and veterinary history for each greyhound, you must ensure you record the administration of any Schedule 2, 3, 4 or 8 drugs (by date, time, dose, route of administration, drug name and name of person giving the drug) and any prohibited substances including any injectables.

Understanding medications and their use

The rules of racing state that a greyhound must be presented to race free of prohibited substances, and that the trainer of a greyhound that returns a positive swab shall be guilty of an offence. The exceptions to this rule are the presence of exempted substances such as antibiotics (except procaine penicillin), antiparasitics (except levamisole), vaccinations and the drug ethyloestrenol when prescribed by a veterinarian to be given for the purpose of preventing oestrus in the female. In addition, GAR 79A lists banned substances that must never be administered to greyhounds and it is also against the rules to possess or attempt to acquire them.

It is therefore very important as a trainer that you fully understand the nature and proper use of any medications you use. This includes legitimate medications prescribed by a veterinarian as well as any natural therapies, nutraceuticals or supplements that you give your greyhounds.

It is inevitable at some time during your

training career you will have a sick or injured greyhound that is prescribed medication to help it recover, to reduce pain or to treat a disease process. Medications can be administered in a number of different ways - orally, topically (applied to the skin or affected area directly) or by injection. In most cases, the body absorbs or 'takes up' the medication and it will travel via the bloodstream to have its effect. Almost immediately, other systems begin working to break down (metabolise) and excrete (eliminate) the medication, either via the liver or kidneys - this is why urine is most often used for drug detection. 'Metabolites' are substances that are the result of the metabolism of drugs and can be detected in samples.

Every medication will have a period of time during which it will be able to be detected by laboratory tests (i.e. the detection time). Due to the variation in how individuals metabolise and eliminate different drugs, it is important to add a safety factor to the detection time, which is used when calculating a withholding period. After treatment, the level of drug in the dog's system may well drop below the average therapeutic concentration required to have an effect on the body, but if it is still present it will lead to a positive swab. Testing protocols are continually developing and evolving, with laboratories now able to detect much smaller amounts of the drugs and their metabolites as their equipment and testing procedures get more sophisticated.

Why must greyhounds run drug free?

It is vital for the integrity of the sport that all greyhounds are racing on a level playing field and that punters can bet on a

greyhound knowing that it has every chance of a fair run. It is also important that breeders of greyhounds can select their breeding animals based on their true performance, rather than results that are due to artificial enhancements.

Racing drug free is also critical to the welfare of the greyhounds, ensuring that they are not presented to race whilst ill or injured. If they have been unwell, greyhounds should be allowed to fully recover from any illness or injury then undergo training to restore their fitness to racing levels prior to being entered in another race. Trainers who think they are being clever by using pain relieving medications may mask the pain sufficiently to get the dog to run, but the risk to the dog of re-injuring, worsening the injury, or complete breakdown is significant and unacceptable.

What is a 'withholding period' vs a 'detection time'?

Every medication has a defined 'curve' of effect - from the time that it enters the body to the time the last detectable molecule leaves the dog's system - the concentration of the drug within the body can be charted. The time taken to achieve the completion of this curve will depend on the drug, the method of administration, the dosage and its method of excretion. Some drugs take a long time to 'clear' the body, while others are metabolised quite quickly. Drugs that are 'lipid soluble' (can dissolve in fats) tend to take longer to clear as they get widely distributed and stored in fat reserves throughout the body.

From this information about the medication, we can predict how long it will likely take for a drug to be eliminated from the body and no longer be

detectable. The detection time is based on results of an administration study and is the observed point in time that the drug was no longer detected in all animals in that study. From that, a withholding period can be calculated which will factor in the variation in how individual animals process medications (absorption, distribution, metabolism and elimination). For example, if the dog's liver or kidneys are not working well, if they are carrying excess fat, if the dosage given was more than it should be, or the course of treatment was long, then the detection time may be increased. These are just a few of the reasons a variation in the detection time may be observed and why veterinarians add a safety factor when calculating a withholding period.

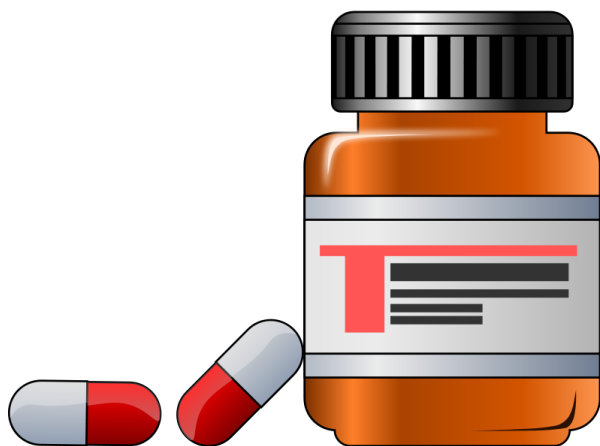
A withholding period is the time (after treatment) that an animal should be excluded from racing based on the medication given. The withholding period indicates the time when the majority of greyhounds in a population will have eliminated the drug from their system. Withholding periods, like detection times, are also estimates but give a guideline for trainers and veterinarians as to how long the greyhound is likely to return a positive swab.

There is information on common medications given to greyhounds and their withholding periods that your veterinarian will be able to access when prescribing treatment. It is important to remember that as the trainer, you are the person responsible for ensuring your greyhound does not return a positive swab and is truly fit and ready to race.

Using prescription medications

Prescription medications can only be prescribed in accordance with the

relevant state and commonwealth legislation to an animal by a veterinarian that has that animal under his or her care, and after taking all reasonable steps to ensure a therapeutic need exists for that substance in that animal. i.e. your veterinarian can only dispense a prescription medication for a particular problem in a particular greyhound. You will be given written instructions as to how the medication is to be administered, how often, and by which route, as well as how it needs to be stored. The amount supplied will be enough for a complete 'course' and it is important that you give the greyhound all of its intended doses and appropriately dispose of any remaining medication.



Drugs in this category are generally those that fall into Schedule 4 (S4) or Schedule 8 (S8) and are only available by prescription. There are strict rules about dispensing and supplying them and the veterinarian must have a proper (bona fide) relationship with the client and patient. This means you cannot ask for them over the counter and the veterinarian must establish that there is a genuine need for these medications in the patient. Because there are such tight rules about prescribing S4 medications, having any prescription medicine in your possession which is not correctly labelled is illegal.

Prescription medications include antibiotics, analgesics (pain killers) and anti-inflammatories. Your greyhound veterinarian will have an excellent understanding of the medications, their effects, side-effects, possible complications and interactions with other medications, and will choose which medication to prescribe accordingly.

You should not administer any medication prescribed for one greyhound to another. Many owners and trainers think they might play 'veterinarian' and dose a sick greyhound with medication 'left over' from another greyhound. This may mean the greyhound receives the wrong dose, or a dose of out-of-date, less effective medication, and you will be assuming that the problem is identical when in fact it rarely is. Giving the wrong medication can worsen the original problem, or may promote resistance to the medication, such as could occur when treating with antibiotics that are not appropriate in a certain disease type.

Using non-prescription medications

There are a number of other medications which are available without prescription. This includes medications that can be sold at the pharmacy, or through other outlets such as pet stores and produce merchants. There are **many of these medications** such as supplements or liniments that **are considered prohibited substances** but do not require prescription.

It is important that you are aware of their presence, as they can be the cause of drug interactions (e.g. a combination might inactivate a drug's effect or cause toxicity), as well as regularly causing positive swabs.

Similar to prescription medications it is important that before these products are administered to a greyhound, you seek sound veterinary advice and that any dosage guidelines are followed, and the correct dose is given at the correct interval and by the correct route. Storage is also important, with many products requiring specific storage conditions to maintain effectiveness. Using out-of-date or poorly stored medications can be not only dangerous to the animal, but may not have the desired effect.

Your role in relation to antibiotic resistance

Around the world, there is a gradual increase in the resistance of some bacteria to antibiotic medications. This is a huge problem as it affects not only animals but also humans. There are now bacteria that do not respond to treatment and continue to cause disease despite treatment with the strongest drugs we know.

Resistance is something that develops when a population of bacteria are not killed completely by a treatment - often because the dosage was incorrect, or the therapeutic levels were not achieved for long enough. When this happens, the 'susceptible' bacteria in the population causing the disease are killed but the 'strongest' (resistant) bacteria survive and go on to re-populate. This leads to a change in the infection from one that was largely susceptible to antibiotics to one that is now made up mainly of the more resistant types - you are actually selecting for resistance. Over time, repeated courses of antibiotics that are given incorrectly can lead to the development of increasingly resistant bacteria, and suddenly you have a disease that is more difficult to cure.



Often the reason that a trainer finishes a course of antibiotics early is because the dog looks better. They do not realise that they are setting themselves up for a more difficult problem in the future. This is why it is important to finish every course of antibiotics, whether the dog looks better or not. A full course is far more likely to kill all of the bacteria, and completely resolve the problem, leaving nothing to come back and haunt you!

If your greyhound is not performing to the level that you expect given its training history, a thorough check by your veterinarian including a blood profile should be considered prior to trying to guess what is wrong and trying to fix it with supplements. It will be money spent wisely!

Greyhound Racing Victoria

46-50 Chetwynd Street,
West Melbourne VIC 3003
Ph: 03 8329 1100
Fax: 03 8329 1000
Email: admin@grv.org.au
Web: www.grv.org.au