

Health and maintenance

Greyhounds do make wonderful pets, but it's important to bear a few simple ideas in mind.

Neutering

Most Greyhounds that leave our kennels are usually already neutered but occasionally this operation has to be carried out at a later date. However, if you receive one directly from a trainer, or another source that has not been neutered, we strongly recommend this be done as soon as possible so as to prevent future unwanted pregnancies/unwanted mating. This also prevents problems in later life.



Skin and coat

In order to keep your Greyhound's coat healthy, a grooming mitt or good brush with firm bristles will be required. They will have been used to regular grooming in the racing kennel and most will stand and enjoy this special attention from you. If they require a bath, ensure they are dried quickly and can lie down somewhere warm.

Many Greyhounds have bare patches, especially on the bony prominences or on their rumps. This is usually due to poor bedding or the hounds preference to lying on concrete or wet paddocks, or stress. With good food, soft bedding and regular brushing, your dogs coat will soon improve and look shiny and healthy. Some dogs may come with scars from their racing days. These, once healed, rarely give any trouble.

Ears

Ears should be checked regularly, as although ear infections are no more common with Greyhounds than other breeds, they can occur. Regular cleaning of the outer ear with cotton balls, plus warm salt water, will keep the ears free of wax that can trap germs leading to infection. Special wipes can also be purchased from pet stores and vets. If your dog is flapping their head and rubbing or pawing at their ear, and the problem persists, seek veterinarian advice. An infection will quickly be cleared up with antibiotic ointment or drops. Many Greyhounds are sensitive with their ears due to racing (due to tattoo checking) so take care when handling them.

Parasite Control

Regular grooming of your Greyhound will ensure you are quickly aware if they pick up fleas or ticks. There are a variety of products available to control parasites, however the more effective ones need to be obtained from a veterinary surgery. Remove fleas with a flea comb and bathe your dog with a flea shampoo, but remember, the bath only takes care of the adult fleas on your dog at that time. For more extensive protection, as well as control over pre adult fleas, you will have to treat your dog and your home especially carpets and bedding. A house spray from the vets is available for this. Your dog will have had a worming treatment at the kennels before you take them home to ensure their intestines are free from infection. Regular doses with a complete wormer available from the vets are necessary. We recommend worming at 3 monthly intervals.

Feet and Nails

The feet and nails have been very important to your Greyhound while they have been racing and need continuing care from you. Their nails will have been clipped short on a regular basis and you will notice they grow quickly. Once you have their trust, hold their feet firmly and gently clip a small amount from their nails straight across with sharp nail cutters. Alternatively, file with a nail file. We are always happy to cut their nails at the kennels if you feel unsure.

Check your Greyhounds pads, feet and legs for cuts after they have been exercising outdoors. This is particularly important if they have been running in a large area that you cannot examine completely. Sharp stones, sticks, thorns and glass can cause cuts or become embedded in the foot. Wash their feet in warm soapy water and seek veterinary advice if necessary.

Teeth



The importance of good dental hygiene cannot be overstated.

Dogs, like people, can get gingivitis (inflammation of the gums caused by bacteria) and can suffer from decay and lose teeth

without proper care. Gingivitis is a primary cause of bad breath in canines.

When the greyhound is admitted to be neutered by our vets, they will do a thorough teeth cleaning. Once this has been done, maintenance is down to you.

Regular chews, cooked bones and dental treats (available from pet stores) will help with some of the plaque build-up; however brushing their teeth is the most effective form of dental care. Some dogs will let you brush their teeth straight away, however, others will need to have their confidence built up.

You can do this in stages:

- for the first few days gently stroke your dog's muzzle
- once your greyhound accepts this happily, you can then progress to lifting their lips up and praising them for their co-operation.
- once your dog has gained confidence in you, they will allow you to gently brush their teeth. Use a soft bristle toothbrush and a canine toothpaste, usually flavoured with chicken or beef. This will be a real treat for your dog, who will find the taste so delicious they will try to chew on the brush!

Dog toothbrushes/finger brushes and canine toothpaste are available at pet stores or from your local vet.

Regular attention to the mouth will save money for you and pain for your dog later. Check your greyhound's teeth and gums regularly and seek veterinary advice if in doubt.