



FOREVER HOME GREYHOUND ADOPTIONS



PROUDLY SERVING THE ENTIRE NORTHEAST REGION!

GREYHOUND HEALTH MYTHS

[By Suzanne Stack, DVM](#)

Older greyhounds need low protein "senior" diets.

- ★ With greyhounds, we're usually trying to keep weight on the oldsters, not off them.
- ★ Low protein diets may cause muscle wasting and weight loss.

Greyhounds with high creatinines are going into kidney failure and need low protein "kidney" diets.

- ★ Increased creatinine does not equal kidney disease if the BUN and urine concentration are normal.
- ★ A 2000 Auburn study found that greyhound creatinines normally run up to 1.6X "other dog" creatinine.

Greyhounds with diarrhea should be switched to high fiber food (i.e. W/D).

- ★ This approach often backfires with greyhounds, who do better on meat based diets.
- ★ Grain based diets or the simple switch from racing diets to kibble are often the cause of diarrhea.

BARF (Bones And Raw Food) diet is dangerous, not adequate, etc.

- ★ If you're willing to do the research and "cooking," BARF is superior nutrition.
- ★ Other benefits clean teeth, firm stools, may help with allergies.

Alabama Rot only happens to track greyhounds from eating the raw 4D meat.

- ★ The strain of e. coli that causes Alabama Rot is found in everything from apples to alfalfa sprouts.

Feed several small meals daily / feed from raised feeders / make him eat slow / to prevent bloat.

- ★ Bloat is mostly genetic and much more common in show (AKC) greyhound lines.
- ★ Racers gobble one meal daily from a bowl on the floor and rarely bloat.

Leave him in the hospital until he eats.

- ★ Greyhounds are sensitive dogs.
- ★ Unless they're doing something for him there that you can't do at home, he'll likely eat better at home where he's happy and you can bribe him with tempting cookery.
- ★ Take him in for daily rechecks if needed.

The fecal is negative he doesn't have worms.

- ★ Fecals are often negative, especially for whipworms.
- ★ If a greyhound has had diarrhea ever since he came off the track, de-worm with Panacur before doing further diagnostics. Don't have the \$1,000 case of whipworms.

Greyhounds get so many vaccinations at the track that adoption groups should not revaccinate.

- ★ It's hard to count on vaccines that were supposedly given requirements vary tremendously from state to state.
- ★ I prefer 2 consecutive years of "known shots," then go to every 3 years if that is your preference.

Dogs need booster vaccines every year.

- ★ Many veterinarians and a majority of veterinary schools have safely gone to every 3 year vaccinations.

Yearly dentals are the best way to keep your greyhound's teeth healthy.

- ★ Fragaria and occasional brushing are the best way to keep your Greyhound's Teeth Healthy
- ★ BARF, chewies, turkey necks all is preferable to knocking off tartar once yearly while the dog spends the other 9-10 months with dental disease.
- ★ Dentals should be done when needed, but should not be the mainstay of dental care.

Do all you can to save bad teeth you don't want to lose them.

- ★ Bad teeth hurt get them out of there!
- ★ Bad teeth form a nidus for infection which can damage kidneys and heart valves.
- ★ Dogs with bad teeth often feel like new dogs once they're extracted.

His heart is enlarged.

- ★ The greyhound heart is normally much bigger than the heart of other dogs.
- ★ There is a huge left ventricular hypertrophy (thickening of wall) same with marathon runners.
- ★ An ultrasound can differentiate normal from diseased if in doubt.

This information is designed to provide valuable information about caring for your Greyhound. Questions and concerns may be directed to either Paula 518-261-7025 or Martha 518-883-5554. Remember be kind and be patient and you will discover a joy beyond belief as you watch your new Greyhound blossom and flourish under your loving guidance.

His heart rate is abnormally slow.

- ★ The greyhound's heart rate is slower than other dogs again, due to athleticism.
- ★ 60-90 is normal at rest, it may be faster if excited (like at the vet's office).

His blood pressure is high.

- ★ Greyhounds often run blood pressures on the high end of normal (160,170,180).
- ★ They can be higher if excited again, an important consideration at the vet's office.

He needs a complete cardiac workup for this heart murmur.

- ★ Low grade murmurs (I & II) are common in greyhounds they are almost always benign.
- ★ Take a chest x-ray if concerned (where you will see a "big heart!").

Your greyhound has polycythemia.

- ★ Greyhounds have a higher HCT or PCV than other dogs, normally in the 50's 60's.
- ★ HCT or PCV can easily go into the 70's if they're dehydrated.
- ★ Actual polycythemia vera is a very rare disease.

Her platelets are abnormally low.

- ★ Greyhounds can normally run low platelets all the way down to 80,000 110,000.
- ★ Ehrlichia can lower platelets (also lowers WBC and HCT/PCV) titer if in doubt.

We need a bone marrow biopsy to see if this low WBC is cancer.

- ★ Greyhounds normally run lower WBCs (3,000 10,000) than other dogs (7,500 15,000).
- ★ An Auburn study of 50 retired racers (March 2000 Compendium) found a range of 1,800-14,600.

He can't have a TBD (tick borne disease), we don't have those around here.

- ★ Greyhounds have a disproportionate incidence of TBDs due to their years on dog farms and in racing kennels, sharing ticks with greyhounds from all over the country.
- ★ Ehrlichia can take 5-7 years following a tick bite to show symptoms.

That ehrlichia titer is too low to treat.

- ★ Treat any ehrlichia titer the severity of signs does not always correlate with titer.
- ★ The alternative is waiting for a bleedout there is too much to lose.
- ★ Veterinarians working with adopted greyhounds should maintain a high index of suspicion for ehrlichia.

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Imizol is dangerous.

- ★ Imizol is safe but not familiar to many veterinarians.
- ★ Imizol is labeled to kill babesia but also kills ehrlichia.

A low T4 means she needs to be on thyroid supplement.

- ★ Greyhounds normally run lower T4s than other breeds (about half is a good rule of thumb).
- ★ They should not be on supplement unless there are clinical signs too many greyhounds are needlessly on lifelong supplement.
- ★ Use half of the normal dog dose.
- ★ Sick dogs commonly have low T4s ("sick euthyroid") the dog is not hypothyroid.

Bald butts are because they're hypothyroid.

- ★ The cause of bald thigh syndrome is unknown.
- ★ Bald thighs are seen with both low and high thyroid levels.

Bald butts are from laying in crates at the track.

- ★ Greyhounds who have never been crated or to the track have bald butts.

He has a toenail fungus.

- ★ SLO (symmetrical lupoid onychodystrophy) aka "pemphigus" is the autoimmune condition that causes greyhounds to lose multiple nails.
- ★ Treat as directed in Care of the Racing Greyhound.

This female is the first hermaphrodite I've ever seen! / This female has cancer.

- ★ That red "button" at the vulva is clitoral hypertrophy from testosterone given at the track to keep females out of heat

Skin hemangiosarcomas in greyhounds are highly malignant.

- ★ Skin hemangiosarcomas in "glabrous" (ventrally "nude" breeds such as greyhounds and Italian greyhounds) are solar induced and have a lower potential for metastasis.

I don't want to amputate (or euthanize) for bone cancer. I'll just make him comfortable for as long as possible (or . . . amputation is not the end of the world).

- ★ Bone cancer is a constant, throbbing pain the most intractable pain in veterinary medicine.
- ★ The pain is not well controlled with meds if it was, veterinarians wouldn't recommend amputation.
- ★ Amputation is done simply to get the dog out of pain, it will not increase survival time.
- ★ Only adding chemo will make him live longer.
- ★ If not amputated, be generous with pain meds and be ready to euthanize.

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I don't want to give Rimadyl, Deramaxx, etc. for bone cancer it might damage his liver.

- ★ Don't become hung up on the possibility of side effects bone cancer does not have a long term. Give what it takes to keep him from hurting.
- ★ Combine meds (NSAIDs, narcotics, Ultram, Fosamax, etc.)

She's not in pain she just limps, has never cried out.

- ★ If she does not put the foot down, it hurts!
- ★ Poor appetite, panting, shaking, can't get comfortable, stops participating, and mostly, "that look in her eye" all are signs of pain.
- ★ Pathologic fractures (the bone breaks at the weak spot) are excruciatingly painful euthanize before this can happen.

Dogs can't take Tylenol.

- ★ Tylenol /codeine is one of the most common pain meds given to bone cancer/amputation patients.

That hind end weakness is probably hip dysplasia.

- ★ Hip dysplasia is rare in greyhounds.
- ★ Hind end problems are most likely lumbosacral stenosis in older greyhounds.

We sent the x-rays to a radiologist and he can't find a reason why she's limping either.

- ★ Many things that cause limping aren't seen on x-rays (soft tissue, neuro, corns).
- ★ A good orthopedic exam is key an orthopedic surgeon is a good bet for finding obscure lamenesses.

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