

GRNZ Health and Welfare Fact Sheet

When do I need to take my greyhound to the vet?

Ensuring optimal welfare

(GRV are thanked for providing part of this content)



GRNZ understands that participants always want to provide the best care to their greyhounds. It can be tricky sometimes, to decide whether an injury or illness is minor and can be treated at home or whether it requires veterinary treatment.

The decision whether to manage an illness or an injury yourself at home, or whether to seek veterinary assistance and treatment, should be based on factors such as:

- Is the injury or illness significant i.e. causing significant pain, distress or potentially life threatening without veterinary intervention?
- Can I treat this at home and adequately protect the welfare of my greyhound?
- Am I confident I know what the illness or injury is?
- Am I confident I am correctly treating and managing the condition?
- Do I fully understand the likely and potential complications of undertaking the treatment, and when I might need help if things get complicated?

Remember: When in doubt, it is always better to take your greyhound to a veterinarian. Your veterinarian is best placed to determine what the problem is and provide advice. They may offer a telephone consultation or ask to see the greyhound.



Conditions requiring **immediate** veterinary care:

- Vomiting- risks include Gastric Dilatation and Volvulus (GDV) which is a veterinary emergency, Intestinal obstruction, infectious disease, dehydration, electrolyte imbalances.
- Diarrhoea-risks include dehydration, intestinal obstruction, infectious diseases, parasites
- Lack of appetite/ refusing meals- risk of severe illness, fever
- Excessive water intake and refusing water- risks include Water Diabetes Syndrome (which can be fatal), dehydration, kidney damage, electrolyte imbalances
- Excessive urination, or difficulty urinating- can indicate a blockage, infection or water diabetes syndrome
- Stiffness and dehydration-can be life threatening
- Fever (>39 degrees C)
- Any suspected fracture or dislocation (requires on-going stabilisation and pain relief)
- Lameness or leg carrying- can be indicative of a serious injury and requires veterinary assessment and pain relief
- Significant swelling in a limb or body part- can be indicative of a serious injury, infection or tumour and can be life threatening
- Inability to stand, seizures or muscle tremors- is a veterinary emergency
- Any dog fight wound- is a veterinary emergency
- Significant (that is, bigger than 1 cm) wounds or lacerations - may have caused damage to underlying structures and require veterinary assessment.

Minor injuries and illnesses that can be treated at home:

Many injuries and illnesses need to be assessed by your usual veterinarian within 1 to 3 days of the symptoms appearing. These include:

- Coughing (as long as gum colour good and temperature normal)
- Eye discharge (as long as the eyeball remains clear and sight is normal)
- Skin conditions i.e. minor irritation, sand burn
- Muscle tears (without significant swelling or leg carrying)
- Mild swelling
- Bruising (as long as moving normally and no significant swelling)
- Mild muscle soreness
- Mild or recurrent lameness
- Minor pad and claw abrasions or sand burn



Wounds that can be treated at home:

Many participants are able to provide first aid to a greyhound and treat minor wounds, but if the wound does not heal the greyhound will need veterinary treatment. Most lacerations are best treated immediately rather than being left for 2 – 3 days to reduce the risk of infection and improve the success of surgery, if the decision is made to stitch/suture the wound. While the wound is healing, monitor the greyhound closely and should these symptoms appear, take your greyhound to the vet:

- Swelling
- Pain (e.g. soreness, licking or guarding the wound)
- Heat around the wound
- Pus or oozing liquid
- Fever or lethargy in the greyhound
- Ongoing bleeding

Treatment principles and recommended First Aid:

Treatment Principles:	
<p>If an injury is suspected then there are some general treatment principles that need to be considered - Rest, Ice, Compression and Elevation (RICE). However, elevation is impractical in many instances.</p>	
<p>REST:</p>	<p>Rest is important as it lessens stress on the injured area. You may need to apply strict rest for a period of time, depending upon the type and severity of the injury.</p> <p>Different amounts of rest are required for different injuries and level of severity of the injury, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● for a muscle strain lead-controlled exercise for 5-10 days may be required; ● for a fractured hock being managed conservatively in a splint or cast, the greyhound may be confined to its kennel and only out on lead to empty for the first 3-6 weeks; and ● for shin-soreness, lead work only for 2-3 weeks as part of a treatment program is often required. <p>Failing to rest places strain on the injured part of the body and can lead to worsening the injury or even result in an injury that ends your greyhound's racing career. For example, hard walking and free running or trialling a greyhound with a ruptured back muscle can lead to additional injury and increased bleeding, swelling and pain.</p> <p>Continuing to exercise a greyhound with stress/fatigue fractures</p>

	<p>causes progression of the injury; maybe resulting in complete fracture.</p> <p>If you are unsure about how much rest your greyhound needs after an injury, seek immediate advice from your veterinarian.</p>
ICE:	<p>Ice is commonly applied to soft tissue injuries for 5-7 minutes, 3-6 times daily, for the first three or so days following injuries such as torn muscles (monkey, triangle and back muscle).</p> <p>Cold pack application can also be used as a treatment for muscle soreness.</p> <p>Ice can be used to treat fractures initially, but compressive support (refer below) is preferable for these injuries.</p> <p>The application of cold reduces bleeding, swelling and discomfort, and reduces the oxygen demands on the injured tissues.</p>
COMPRESSION:	<p>Compression is usually provided by bandaging to restrict swelling and/or bleeding and provide physical support to the injured area.</p> <p>Many greyhound wounds and injuries benefit from the first-aid application of bandaging and participants should make themselves familiar with bandaging techniques.</p> <p>If the location of the injury is obvious, or once there are signs of swelling developing, the application of a firm padded compression bandage will minimise additional swelling and support the injured area, reducing the likelihood of additional injury.</p>

FIRST AID for Injuries:	
BLEEDING FROM WOUNDS:	<p>Bleeding needs to be controlled as soon as possible.</p> <p>Initial treatment should involve direct pressure being applied to the wound, followed by the placement of a dressing and bandage to maintain pressure over the injury.</p> <p>If bleeding is extensive, immediate veterinary assistance</p>

	<p>should be sought.</p> <p>If bleeding appears to be seeping through to the outer layers of the bandage, additional layers of bandaging should be applied over the top of the original bandage. Do not remove the initial bandage to replace it. Seek veterinary attention immediately.</p>
<p>OPEN WOUNDS:</p>	<p>Open wounds should be cleaned of dirt or other material (such as grass, straw, leaf matter) using large volumes of sterile saline/salty solution or clean water.</p> <p>The wound should then be covered with a clean (preferably sterile) dressing and bandaged to cover and/or support the injured area until veterinary attention can be provided.</p> <p>For small wounds (<1 cm) that you intend to attempt to treat yourself, antiseptic spray may be useful, but it should be noted that this can sting/cause pain.</p>
<p>SUSPECTED FRACTURES:</p>	<p>Veterinary assessment must be sought immediately.</p> <p>Suspected fractures must be bandaged and supported as soon as possible to support the injury, reduce post-injury swelling, and to minimise further trauma to surrounding soft tissue structures (tendon, muscle, ligament, blood vessels, nerves and skin).</p> <p>Movement of the injured area should be minimal to avoid additional pain.</p> <p>A firm, multilayer, padded bandage or Robert Jones bandage should be applied to the area and veterinary attention sought immediately.</p> <p>It is not acceptable to leave a suspected fracture unsupported nor is it desirable or necessary to allow swelling to subside before an X-ray can be taken.</p> <p>Supportive bandaging with or without additional splinting (long bone fractures/fracture dislocations) of the injured area should be implemented immediately prior transport to the veterinary clinic or while awaiting veterinary attention.</p>
<p>DISLOCATIONS:</p>	<p>Dislocations require immediate veterinary attention so that</p>

	<p>the dislocation can be reduced (put back in place) as quickly as possible.</p> <p>Apply support bandaging as per a fracture. Do not attempt to put it back in yourself, as you may do further damage.</p>
<p>MUSCLE TEARS:</p>	<p>Muscle tears are painful injuries and are usually accompanied by bleeding, bruising and swelling.</p> <p>Muscle tears do not usually present as a lameness.</p> <p>Some of the first-aid measures of RICE are applicable to this type of injury.</p> <p>If your greyhound does not show any improvement in movement/pain levels after 2-3 days, you should seek veterinary attention.</p> <p>Veterinary attention is usually recommended as anti-inflammatories can be prescribed to make your greyhound more comfortable.</p> <p>Your veterinarian can also assess the severity of the muscle tear and provide guidance for exercise and a rehabilitation plan for recovery, the recovery time, and suitable return to training options.</p>