

Welfare Standards Applicable to Young Puppies



It is important to understand that young greyhound puppies require a great deal of care and attention specific to their age. The **Greyhound Welfare Standards** contain the requirements necessary for looking after young puppies to ensure they grow to become fit and healthy adult greyhounds.

STAFFING RATIOS

For kennels caring for puppies 0-16 weeks, providing for their care, exercise and socialisation requires a staff ratio of 1 person to 25 greyhound puppies.

Greyhound Welfare Standard 1.42

For kennels caring for more than 50 greyhounds, the following minimum staffing requirements apply:

- (a) at least one staff member on-site per 50 greyhounds where all greyhounds are over 16 weeks of age;
- (b) at least one staff member for every 25 greyhounds aged between 0-16 weeks.

Greyhound Welfare Standard 1.43

The best way to make sure the pups are feeding well is to weigh each pup daily. You will need to have a way of identifying each pup. By weighing them, you will be able to pick the pups that are struggling and may need extra help with hand feeding/bottle feeding to keep up with the rest of the litter well before they become dehydrated or unwell.

In the first 24 hours it is common (but not ideal) for some pups to lose a little weight, but after that there should be a definite gain each day, even if it is only a few grams. Pups that stay the same weight over a 24-hour period should immediately be given priority on the teats, and pups that lose weight should be very closely monitored and supplemented if needed. If in doubt, you should contact your veterinarian for advice.

LPs must monitor puppies regularly to ensure they are feeding properly and gaining sufficient weight; and seek veterinary advice for any puppies which are not feeding properly, or do not gain weight.

Greyhound Welfare Standard 4.27

THE FIRST TWO WEEKS

During the first two weeks, the pups are totally reliant on their mother for everything. They cannot see or hear fully as their eyes and ears have not yet opened. They are unable to shiver, and rely on their mother and each other for warmth. They are unable to regulate their own temperature, so it is vital that they remain warm and don't 'wander off' from the litter. This is why a whelping box is important as it confines the pups and prevents them from getting away from their littermates. If a pup becomes cold, it becomes weak and unable to suckle. If it can't suckle, it becomes dehydrated and its blood sugar levels fall dangerously low.

It is important to provide a heat source for the puppies (e.g. 25-watt lamp), particularly during colder weather, to ensure they can maintain their body temperature, because their internal temperature regulation does not work at this age. In warmer weather, it is important to provide an alternative cooler area for the female greyhound/mother.

Puppies can't toilet without some stimulation from their mother. At this stage the biggest risks to their survival are cold and hunger. Pups can dehydrate very quickly as they have no body reserves. During these first two weeks you will need to check the pups often and keep the whelping box and the bedding clean. Getting into a routine where each of the pups is gently handled, weighed, and inspected each day is best.

When the pups have reached two weeks of age it is time to worm them all, along with the female. Roundworms are a particular problem in young pups as they are passed through the milk to the pups.

THE THIRD AND FOURTH WEEKS

Puppies' eyes open during their second week and they begin to start moving around and walking at three to four weeks. It is usual to start providing puppies with some solid puppy food (soaked puppy kibble in flat bowls) at around three to four weeks of age. Water should also be provided in shallow bowls, once puppies can see and are exploring.

Pups also do a lot of exploring with their mouths. They bite and chew each other, the female, the bedding and anything else they can get their mouths on. Providing softer puppy-safe toys of different textures at this age can stimulate this development.

Puppies must be provided with access to fresh clean drinking water from three weeks of age.

Greyhound Welfare Standard 1.11



SOCIALISATION REQUIREMENTS

Appropriate socialisation and exposure to typical kinds of environments are essential for good dog welfare. The acceptance of novel stimuli* without fear, known as habituation, is most easily achieved in dogs prior to 8 weeks of age.

Fear and anxiety due to insufficient or inappropriate socialisation is common and has been identified as a significant issue within the Australian and New Zealand greyhound racing industry; impacting both on racing ability and suitability for rehoming. Consequences include increased numbers of 'non-chasers', poor raceday performance, kennel distress, hyper-excitability and prolonged post-race recovery. Anxious dogs require protracted periods of 'rehabilitation' prior to rehoming, creating bottle necks within the adoption programme. Poorly socialised dogs are welfare compromised and are generally not desired as domestic pets.

See [Raising Resilient Greyhounds](#) for further information on socialisation activities for puppies.

All greyhound puppies must be provided with the following minimum socialisation during their critical socialisation period (3-16 weeks of age):

- (a) Puppies must not be permanently separated from their mother before eight weeks of age, unless on the advice of a veterinarian to protect the health of the puppies, or the female. Advice from a veterinarian must be sought if there are any concerns for the welfare of the puppies or the female;
- (b) Regular, safe, supervised contact with other vaccinated greyhounds and/or other vaccinated pet dogs from eight weeks of age, once their primary vaccinations are completed;
- (c) Safe exposure to other animals;
- (d) Be exposed to positive interactions with people other than their usual handlers, which may include children where possible;
- (e) Be provided with access to different surfaces in their pen or kennel environment (e.g. bed and bedding material, concrete, grass, carpet, etc);
- (f) Be provided with exercise options that encourage chasing behaviour such as chasing games, and a variety of toys;
- (g) From eight weeks, be provided with opportunities to be separated from their litter mates for short periods, in the presence of a handler;
- (h) Be taught to wear a collar and walk on a lead;
- (i) Puppies must not be muzzled at any time, unless under the direction of a veterinarian, or during education, for short periods at a time, while supervised.

Greyhound Welfare Standard 3.8

Unless directed by a veterinarian, puppies must not be sold, leased, or otherwise transferred or permanently separated from their mother or litter mates before eight (8) weeks of age.

Greyhound Welfare Standard 4.30

LPs require the permission of GRNZ to move or transfer a greyhound breeding female and her litter of puppies prior to eight (8) weeks of age.

Greyhound Welfare Standard 4.31

* Any sight, sound, smell, other dogs and animals, people or environment that the greyhound will experience at any stage of its life.

VACCINATIONS

Puppies must be vaccinated according to the Rules (R25) at six to eight weeks of age. Puppies will also be microchipped by the veterinarian at the first vaccination. Ear branding is no longer performed on puppies.

DEWORMING ADVICE

Puppies (2-12 weeks of age)	Treat every 2 weeks from 2 weeks of age. Liquid deworming preparations registered for use in puppies are recommended until 8 weeks. Tablets registered for use in puppies can be given from 8 weeks.
Puppies (12 weeks to 6 months of age)	Treat monthly with an all-wormer registered for use in puppies.



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