

When to take your greyhound to the vet

Industry Practice Guide 3.0



Greyhound Welfare Code of Practice

Relevant Standards

3.1 Participants must inspect greyhounds in their care at least twice a day. **R**

3.2 Participants must ensure that they have reliable access to a veterinarian (or veterinarians) capable of providing 24-hour veterinary advice in regard to all greyhounds in the participant's care.

3.3 Veterinary treatment must be provided to a greyhound or puppy where necessary. **R**

3.4 Any directions of a veterinarian in relation to treatment of pain, injury, ill health, distress or post-surgical care must be followed. **R**

Participants want the best for their greyhounds, but unfortunately greyhounds cannot tell us when they need to go to a veterinarian.

Both the Greyhound Welfare Code of Practice and the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act* require participants to provide veterinary treatment to a greyhound when it is needed.

But sometimes it can be difficult to determine when veterinary care is needed. Some minor injuries or illnesses can be managed quite effectively at home.

Deciding when you need to take a greyhound to the vet is a judgment call. Here are some things to think about in making that judgment call:

- Are you confident that you know what the problem is?
- If you know what the problem is, are you confident that you can treat and manage it?
- Is the greyhound suffering? Does it need pain relief that you can't provide?
- Are there any risks or possible complications of treating the problem yourself and if there are, what is your plan to address them?

Remember: When in doubt, it is always better to err on the side of caution and take your greyhound to a veterinarian. Your veterinarian is best placed to determine what the problem is and provide advice.

Some signs of illness or injury can be obvious, and require immediate veterinary attention. Such signs include:

- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Lack of appetite
- Excessive water intake
- Excessive urination, or difficulty urinating
- Stiffness and dehydration
- Fever
- Any suspected fracture or dislocation
- Lameness or leg carrying
- Significant swelling in a limb or body part
- Inability to stand, seizures or muscle tremors
- Any dog fight wound
- Significant (that is, bigger than 1 cm) wounds or lacerations.

Minor injuries and illnesses

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

- Coughing
- Eye discharge
- Skin conditions
- Muscle tears
- Mild swelling
- Bruising
- Mild muscle soreness
- Mild or recurrent lameness

Wounds

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 look for signs of:

- 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

If these symptoms appear, take your greyhound to the vet.

NSW Government acknowledges the work of Greyhound Racing Victoria, which informed development of this Guide.