

# Worm and parasite prevention

Industry Practice Guide 5.0



## Greyhound Welfare Code of Practice

### Relevant Standards

**3.14** Participants must administer an effective internal and external parasite control program (e.g. gastrointestinal worm, heartworm, ear mites, fleas and ticks) which is age appropriate, to all greyhounds in their care. **R**

**3.15** Worming and parasite treatments must be used and stored in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions or at the direction of a Veterinarian. **R**

**5.23** Visitors to all greyhound housing areas must be provided with access to hot and cold water hand washing facilities with soap, or hand sanitising stations.

## Worms are very common in greyhounds – and dogs in general – and can have long-term health effects.

Some worms can also be transmitted from animals to humans, with children most likely to be affected. Greyhounds most often become infected with worms by consuming worms or eggs from their environment. Worm eggs can survive for long periods in the ground, often for many years, resulting in repeated exposure and infection.

Worms (roundworm and hookworm) can also be spread from a dam to her puppies during pregnancy via the placenta, or via milk when lactating.

Worming should be part of a greyhound's regular health management. Treating puppies is particularly important, as they are most susceptible to the effects of worms. Heavy worm burdens, particularly in puppies, can be life-threatening if untreated.

## Types of worms

- Roundworm has a thin, spaghetti-like appearance – usually about 10 - 12cm long. Symptoms of roundworm infection include weight loss, weakness, vomiting, diarrhea, coughing or mucus in the stool, and stunted growth.
- Hookworm. Symptoms of hookworm include lethargy, anaemia, poor appetite, and black or dark stools that may contain blood.
- Tapeworm can infect a greyhound when it eats larvae from an infected host (e.g. fleas or rodents). Tapeworm infection often has no obvious symptoms, though small, rice-like segments may be found around the greyhound's anus or in the stool. Mature tapeworms will cause a puppy to eat more than normal without gaining weight.
- Whipworm lives in a greyhound's digestive tract, causing bowel inflammation. Trainers may notice mucus and/or blood in the greyhound's stool, weight loss, or diarrhoea.
- Coccidia is an organism that can live in a puppy's intestines. It can cause diarrhoea, fever, weight loss and loss of appetite.
- Heartworm is potentially the most serious of the parasites that affect greyhounds and can be fatal. It is transmitted via mosquitoes. Symptoms include coughing, lethargy and fatigue.

Here are some general warning signs that a greyhound or puppy may be infected with worms:

- Weight loss without loss of appetite
- Weakness and listlessness
- Diarrhoea and vomiting
- Swollen stomach
- Dull coat
- Coughing
- Greyhound rubbing its bottom on the ground ("scooting")

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Preventing worms is an ongoing obligation. For many trainers, these measures are part of general kennel maintenance:

- Keep kennels and bedding clean
- Control pests that carry worms, such as snails, mice, rats and fleas
- Remove faeces from kennels and yards
- Regularly turn any yards that have sand as a surface
- Always wash your hands after contact with greyhounds.

### Worming treatment

Most importantly, all puppies and greyhounds should be treated for worms regularly. Administering worm treatments is a compulsory requirement under the NSW Greyhound Welfare Code of Practice.

Speak to your veterinarian about when to start worming puppies, the best products to use, and how often to treat your greyhounds.

Some worms are resistant to medications commonly used to treat them, so speak to your veterinarian about deworming schedules in your region.

Below is a typical worming schedule:

AGE	WHEN TO TREAT
New born puppies (Birth to 12 weeks)	Treat every 2 weeks from 2 weeks of age
Puppies – growing (From 12 weeks to 6 months of age)	Treat monthly
From 6 months	Treat every 6 months
Pregnant and lactating bitches	Treat bitches before mating, 10 days before whelping, and every two weeks while lactating

Use of worming products containing Levamisole in racing greyhounds should be avoided, as Levamisole may cause the greyhound to return a positive swab.

### Heartworm treatment

Heartworm prevention is important, speak to your vet about the product best suited to your region.

An annual injectable Pro-heart treatment and a monthly treatment for Heartworm are available.



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