



Trainer's Competency Pack

Level 3 - Public Trainer

Version 1.0



Greyhound Racing Victoria

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Chapter 10

10.1 – Requirements for a Public Trainer

What is Public Trainer?

A Public Trainer is someone who trains greyhounds for owners other than themselves. A Public Trainer may have a small kennel of greyhounds, right up to a large commercial facility.

Of course if you are training greyhounds for other people, there are some different requirements that you must meet compared to an owner/trainer. Stepping into the public training arena means you will probably have staff to manage, training agreements, and the increased administrative requirements that go with a registered business. You will also have to communicate effectively with owners, keeping them up to date with their greyhound's progress.

Code of Practice Requirements

If you are charging a fee for boarding and training, have an ABN for your business, or house more than 10 greyhounds on your property, you will have to comply with the minimum standards set out in the Bureau of Animal Welfare Code of Practice for Greyhound Establishments.

This is slightly stricter than the industry code in that it requires any greyhounds entering the facility to have a current C5 vaccination, and there is a requirement to have public liability insurance coverage. There are also stipulated numbers of greyhounds per staff member ratios.

You can get a copy of this code by contacting GRV or by contacting the Bureau of Animal Welfare - either via their website or directly.



Administrative Requirements for Public Trainers

Apart from all of the administrative requirements that come with having paid staff, there is also the requirement to keep good records about the greyhounds that are boarded, or trained by you.

The Code of Practice states that records need to be maintained and kept for a minimum of five (5) years and need to include:

- » The name, identification number of each greyhound over four months of age
- » A description of each greyhound over six months of age including;
 - Sex, and whether the dog is entire or not
 - Colour
 - Birth date
 - Ear-brands and other distinguishing features
 - Dates of vaccination and matching vaccination certificates
 - Dates of worming, parasite, and heartworm treatments
 - Microchip details
- » Details of any litters bred
- » Details of the Owner or 'Authorised Representative' of each Greyhound
- » Date of admission and expected date of collection
- » Details of any medical, dietary, bathing and grooming requirements
- » Details of any leads, collars, or belongings brought in with the greyhound
- » Name and contact number of the Owner's veterinarian
- » Any behaviour changes during boarding
- » Any written requests such as requesting that two greyhounds be housed together

You will also want to record training information, such as trial times, race times, races run and results, along with anything else relevant to the training of the greyhound. It is strongly recommended that you have a written training agreement for each greyhound that you train.

Managing Staff

Smaller training facilities may only have a few greyhounds in work at any one time, but as you build up your numbers, you will eventually come to the point where you are going to require assistance in your kennel.

It may be that you have family members assist you, or people who are interested in learning the industry, but often it will mean hiring staff to assist with the day to day running of your training facility.

Running a small business is not easy, and it is important that you are aware of any relevant rules or legislation. If you are paying people to help you, then you will need to talk to your accountant about the taxation, GST, and superannuation requirements of your business. Getting good advice, and taking the time to do things properly will save you many headaches in the long term.

As discussed in Chapter 2, you will need to ensure that your workplace is safe, and that you meet all safety requirements. Any job working with animals has some level of unpredictability, but you are required to minimise the risks to staff as much as possible.

The right people for the job - finding staff

If you are going to employ people as kennel hands you will have to develop a job description for each person outlining what is expected from them, and give clear and concise instructions as to what you would like them to do. Getting good help can be difficult, and you will need to supervise your staff to ensure that each task is completed to the standard that you expect. When selecting staff you should be looking for people who are good with animals and who are not rough or frightening to the dogs.

Each employee should be clear on the hours they are expected to work, safety requirements associated with each task, and what each task involves. You will have to demonstrate and supervise each task until you are happy they are able to do it properly.

Training Agreements

There are a number of ways that trainers get paid for training greyhounds for other people.

One method is a 'percentage' of stake money. Most trainers use a 50:50 agreement, meaning the owner and the trainer each get half of the money the dog wins. With this method there is no training fee, so it is up to the trainer to ensure that they have good dogs that will win races, otherwise they may not get just rewards for their efforts.

It is important that both the owner and the trainer are clear about who is responsible for other costs. As a guide, the trainer will usually be responsible for feed costs, and will often provide basic muscle checks and vitamin supplements. The owner will usually be responsible for any vet bills, or any other required medical treatments. If the greyhound wins a race, the trainer and owner split the stake money, but any trophies are generally given to the owners. The starter's fee is usually kept by the trainer to help cover the costs of transport.

The other option is to charge a 'training fee'. This means that the trainer will get paid a fee regardless of whether the dog races, wins or loses. The training fee generally also includes a percentage of the dog's prize money as well, but much less than the 50% in the previous type agreement.

It is important that you and the dog's connections are clear about exactly what is included and what is not. It is suggested that a written agreement be made, with both parties to sign it.

The agreement should list:

- » The training fee (if any)
- » The percentage of stake money to be paid to the owner and the trainer
- » When payment is expected, and what happens if payment is not received by that date.
- » Who is responsible for costs associated with;
 - Transport
 - Veterinary care
 - Other required professional help
 - Feeding
 - Any other requirements you feel necessary
- » What happens if the greyhound is injured during training or racing
- » How the agreement is to be terminated by either party

By having a written agreement at the outset, it is possible to prevent any confusion that might end up as a full blown argument. You can even draft a standard form that simply gets filled in with the owner and dog's details and has space for both parties to sign.



10.2 – Communication

Why is Communication Important?

As a Public Trainer you will be required to keep owners up to date with their greyhound's progress, speak to staff, veterinarians, track officials and stewards, attend prize presentations, and possibly get interviewed on radio or television. How you present yourself, and how you speak will reflect not only on yourself, but also on your skills as a trainer.

Making sure that you maintain good written records will go a long way to helping you answer questions, and it is a good idea to also document important conversations so that you can refer back to them at a later stage.

Speaking to Owners

It is important that you keep all of the owners of the dogs you train up to date with their greyhound's progress. Different owners will be interested in different things - those that follow a dog's progress closely may want to discuss things such as trial times, or proposed racing schedules with you, others might just want to know when the greyhound is next engaged to race.

It is important that you are honest about the greyhound's performance, and discuss any concerns you have when they are first detected. This way the owner can make informed decisions about the greyhound's future and care.

For example, if a greyhound is not eating well and has been losing some weight this should be communicated with the owner at the next opportunity. You could then discuss your plans for remedying the situation with them, and keep them up to date with how these strategies have worked. This way the owner knows what you are trying to achieve and how the greyhound is progressing. If you didn't communicate that the dog was off its food with them, and they came past to visit the greyhound without knowing there was any problem, or that you were trying to fix it, they could be quite horrified to see their prize greyhound looking thin and unwell when they thought it was fine. Remember: word of mouth is your best advertisement.

Media Communication

With the increasing awareness by the public of the value of greyhound racing as a wagering medium, and the increased television coverage of races, more emphasis is being placed by the media on interviewing trainers or handlers of the more fancied greyhounds.

Radio Interviews

Generally speaking a radio interview will be planned a few days in advance. You will be contacted with a day and time for the interview, and will be given an outline of the topics to be discussed. This gives you plenty of time to prepare, and it might be a good idea to write down some information that you feel might be relevant. The radio station will often call ahead of time to make sure you are ready for the interview, and then call at the specified time.

It is important that you have a quiet place to talk and a reliable, fully charged phone. It is important that you speak naturally and think about your answers so there are not too many 'umms' or 'ahhs' in each sentence. Although many people get quite nervous with an interview, it is important to simply look at it as a chance to tell people about your greyhounds - something you know more about than anyone else!

Television Interviews

Television interviews are generally pre-recorded at the track in the time space that is available in between the completion of kennelling and the start of the racing program. The interviews are then played before the race containing the greyhound whose trainer or handler featured in the interview.

Unlike radio, the viewers will get to see you, so it is important that you present well. Dress appropriately - remember you are a representative of your kennel and the greyhound racing industry.

When being interviewed try to remember to look at the interviewer - they are the person asking the questions, and you will feel less intimidated by them than the camera. Try to concentrate on the questions being asked and try to formulate an answer as they are being asked. The questions are going to be about your greyhounds so don't worry that you won't know the answers.

Race Presentations

The presentation of a trophy or award to the owner, trainer, or handler of the winning greyhound at the completion of an event is an important part of the image of greyhound racing and provides the club with the ideal opportunity to thank their sponsors and supporters.

It is therefore expected that the recipient of the trophy or award will do their part in thanking the person or company who has contributed to any additional prize money or provided the reward.

When stepping up to speak, the first thing is to make sure that the microphone is correctly adjusted to your height. You will need to speak into the microphone and be aware of where it is so that you do not turn away whilst speaking, and you do not knock it with your hands or face.

Make sure you know who the sponsors are and how to pronounce names correctly. Thank the sponsor first, then any other people who may have assisted you or contributed to the success of the greyhound such as staff, family or owners of the greyhound. You can then express your feelings about having won the event before finishing politely by saying 'Thank You'.





Chapter 11

As a public trainer you are expected to have a higher level of knowledge, both of training techniques, and the care and welfare of the greyhounds you are responsible for. It is expected that you will not only have a good working relationship with your local greyhound veterinarian, but also that you will have some understanding of the internal workings that enable the racing greyhound to move at such incredible speeds yourself. This way you will be able to detect changes that may indicate injury or disease and see to them promptly, ensuring the greyhounds in your care are always presented to race in top condition, and if things go wrong, they get the best care possible.

11.1 – The Musculo-Skeletal System

The Musculo-Skeletal System

The musculo-skeletal system includes the bones that form the skeleton of the greyhound, along with the muscles that act to move the body. Understanding some basic anatomy is important if you are going to be able to watch out for injuries and discuss them effectively with your greyhound veterinarian, the stewards or other trainers.

No-one expects you to know all of the names of the muscles and bones, but you should understand the role of the important bones and muscles, especially those which are predisposed to injury when racing. Having said that, for your own benefit, it is a good idea to continue to study and review diagrams of the muscles and bones to help you become familiar with their names and locations.

Where can I find diagrams?

There are some excellent diagrams in the book 'Care of the Racing and Retired Greyhound'. You could also look at any text book on the anatomy of dogs, but it is often easier to visualise the structure when the diagram is of a greyhound.

The Skeleton

The skeleton of the greyhound consists of 321 individual bones. The skeleton provides the body its frame and also acts to provide protection to important organs such as the brain and heart. The muscles then attach onto various points and, by contracting, they give the movement that allows the dog to walk, turn and run.

The skeleton is a living organ that is constantly being remodelled and re-shaped depending on the forces applied to it. It can also repair damage such as fractures and chips. The skeleton acts to provide the body with a storage place for minerals such as Calcium and Phosphorus. If the body's supplies of calcium are low, then calcium is reabsorbed from the bones and moved to where it is needed, leaving the bones weak and brittle.

The skeleton is also involved in the immune system as the cavities inside the long bones are where the body produces important red and white blood cells. This is the bone marrow.

Bone Growth

The skeleton of the greyhound develops and grows from puppyhood through to about 14-15 months of age. The long bones grow from special areas called 'growth plates' which are made up of cartilage and don't fuse to bone until the dog matures. These growth plates can be damaged in the growing dog which can lead to stunted, uneven or abnormal growth of the bones. Because the growth plates are weaker than bone, they are also a common site of fractures in the young dog.

The Joints

Where two bones come together, they form a joint. There are different types of joints, but the one that is most important for trainers to understand is the 'synovial' joint. In these joints the surface of the bone's end is covered with smooth cartilage, and the joint is surrounded by a 'joint capsule' made of fibrous material that, along with the ligaments, holds the joint together. The joint space is filled with a special fluid that helps 'lubricate' the joint.

Any damage to the joint capsule or ligaments can severely affect the movement of the joint. If the joint surfaces become damaged, the cartilage can wear away leaving the underlying bone exposed. Damage to the joint surface can lead to arthritis developing, so therefore, joint health is very important in the racing athlete.





The Muscles

Each joint of the body is moved by a set of muscles. The muscles have their effect due to the contracting (shortening) of the muscle fibres. For every joint there are usually two sets of muscles - the 'flexors' and the 'extensors' - which work in opposite directions to flex (bend) and extend the joint.

Each muscle has a point where it attaches to the bone. The point closest to the head of the greyhound, or highest up the leg is called the 'origin' of the muscle, and the lower attachment point is called the 'insertion' point. Muscles are attached to the bone by fibrous material called a tendon. (Ligaments attach bone to bone, Tendons attach muscle to bone). Most muscles have a technical name - often a Latin description. There are also common names which are more often used by trainers to describe the muscle that has been injured.

At this stage no one will expect you to remember all of the names, however, you will need to know the common muscles that get injured and where they are located. Again, there are diagrams that you can study so that you can start to understand which muscle is which, and the action it has when it contracts.

Muscles can be damaged during racing or exercise. This may be due to unusually high forces being applied, or from unusual movement that stretches the muscle in a way it was not designed to stretch. Muscle injuries can be minor strains, right through to tears or ruptures. When the muscle is damaged, muscle enzymes can leak into the bloodstream where they are then removed by the kidney and passed out in the urine. This leads to the dog producing red or brown coloured urine after a run - something you should always be on the look out for. Red or brown coloured urine is a sign of either severe muscle damage or a condition called rhabdomyolysis which is caused by excessive stress - both require urgent veterinary attention.

When feeling the muscles of your greyhound after a run, you should be feeling for changes in size and shape, feeling for any swelling or bruising, as well as whether the muscles feel hot, hard, or tight. Low grade muscle injury may not lead to any changes in the gait of the dog, but will decrease the speed, and may then predispose the dog to further injuries.

If the muscle is torn or ruptured, the damage should be easier to detect. The dog will be sore, limping, or will have swelling or fluid accumulation at the site of the injury. Bruising is often seen at the site as well, especially where the skin is pink or there is little hair to cover the area.

If muscle injury is suspected or detected it is important that it is dealt with properly straight away. The amount of damage and swelling needs to be minimised, and the greyhound should be rested from running or training until the muscle has had time to fully repair. It is vital that the dog does not continue to race, as it will not only be slower, but will also be predisposed to further injury. Injured muscles can lead to the development of 'track leg' a bony callus that develops due to the front leg striking the inside of the back leg. It is thought that low grade muscle damage is the predisposing factor as this leads to the changes in gait that allow the legs to hit repeatedly as the dog races at speed.

Depending on the severity of the injury your veterinarian may recommend rest, ice packs, anti-inflammatory treatment, massage, stretching, or the use of one of the therapies designed to help heal the muscle tissue (such as microwave, infra-red, ultrasound or laser treatments). If your greyhound is treated with anti-inflammatories, you will need to ask about the withholding period as these drugs may lead to a positive swab. It is vital that your greyhound does not run on these pain-killers as they simply mask the pain and you will be predisposing the dog to further, more severe injury.

Once the muscle has had time to repair, the dog will then need to be **gradually** brought back into work - not returned immediately to its former work load. The rest needed during the recovery phase leads to a reduction in fitness, and it is easy to put too much stress on the newly healed tissue too early if you over do it. It is also important that the greyhound receives a proper warm up and cool down to further prevent damage to the muscles.

Feet and Limbs

Feet are very important and need to be checked thoroughly after every run. The greyhound's feet are responsible for propelling it along during a race, and foot related problems will very quickly affect performance.

The feet should be examined for cuts and cracks, uneven wear, papillomas and corns. The nails and nail beds along with the webbing between the toes also need to be thoroughly inspected. Each toe should be gently flexed and extended to check for damage or soreness, and any problems investigated.

It is not uncommon for the ligaments of the toe to be damaged or stretched leading to 'sprung' toes or 'dislocated' toes. These sorts of toe injuries are very painful, especially with the huge pressures applied to the toe during the race. Webbing injuries such as sand grazes are often due to problems with the action of certain ligaments or tendons.

Another very important foot problem is 'sesamoiditis' which is inflammation or damage to the small bones that are located at the back of the top toe joint (called 'P1' - where the toe joins the rest of the foot). 'Sesamoids' are a pair of tiny bones located within the tendons behind the toe joint, and help with movement of the various flexor tendons. Sesamoiditis is a very common injury detected during the breaking-in phase of training, leading to painful toe joints with a reduced range of movement. The pain caused by these sesamoids can lead to problems turning, jumping out of the boxes and changing direction at high speed. The most important sesamoids are those in the front feet.

As you examine your greyhound, you should pay particular attention to these joints and if you notice that the joint is swollen or painful, or if the toe does not move as far as it normally does when you examine it, then you should have the area checked by your greyhound vet. Many cases of sesamoiditis will resolve with rest and treatment, but others require veterinary intervention. Having any painful toes checked early by your vet will mean the best chance of your greyhound returning to full speed and will reduce the risk of chronic problems developing.

Developing a routine for checking your greyhound is very important to ensure that any minor injuries or soreness are quickly detected. It is often easiest if you have an experienced person guide you through a routine check for the first few times then develop a set pattern that you will follow. Starting at the same place every time and checking each thing in order means you will get into a habit and will automatically check each area in turn. Don't forget to compare left to right, as this will often give you an ideal opportunity to compare. If you find something amiss, get the dog properly examined by your greyhound veterinarian so that you know what is wrong, and can be given the correct advice about the best method of rehabilitating the dog.





The Role of Physiotherapy and Massage

Similar to human athletes, it is important to keep the muscles and joints as healthy and flexible as possible. No athlete would compete in a race without first properly warming up. This may include stretches, massage, and gentle movement to increase the blood supply to the muscles in preparation for the stresses of hard exercise. Similarly, there is also a great emphasis on correctly cooling down after exertion to help reduce the impact of any stress to the joints and muscles.

Physiotherapy and massage can be used to help prevent injuries by preparing the dog's muscles for a race, and can also be used to help treat problem areas when there has been an injury to a specific area. Many greyhound veterinarians will recommend massage of injured areas, and gentle stretching and flexing to assist with improving the range of movement of a particular joint. It is important not to over do either the massage or the stretches as you can also do damage if you push a joint too far, especially if it is badly damaged and painful!

Massage helps to increase the blood flow to the area being targeted. This circulatory effect is very valuable as an increased blood supply brings with it valuable nutrients and oxygen, along with the blood cells that help clean up the area if it has been injured. The massage also helps to break up and remove the fluid and waste products from swelling or bruising. Massage needs to be done gently, and can be done by hand or with the assistance of a mechanical vibrating machine. Ask your greyhound vet to give you a demonstration if you are not sure.

There are also now other physiotherapy treatments including underwater treadmills that help support the body as the animal moves against the added resistance of the water, along with various treatment machines that assist with increasing blood flow to specific areas. The treatment used will depend on whether you are aiming to prevent or treat an injury, and what sort of injury it is. It is important that you find out which treatment is best for your greyhound, along with how often you should be doing it, and for how long. Incorrect treatment can lead to further problems, as well as a worsening of the original injury, so make sure you get the right advice from the start.

Canine sports medicine has come a long way in the last few decades, and it is an area of medicine that has undergone a lot of changes. There is now some hard science that supports many new techniques, and the old 'witch doctoring' methods are being recognised for what they really are. An example of this is the practice of 'blistering' which was quite common in years gone by but is now considered not only out-moded, but cruel! Blistering involved applying potentially caustic solutions to joints to treat injuries in these areas - often leading to skin burns and damage and doing little to the deeper structures.





11.2 – The Digestive System

The digestive system of the greyhound can be thought to include all of the body systems involved in the break down and digestion of food, the uptake of nutrients and the excretion of solid wastes. Starting at the mouth, the alimentary tract is like a long tube that extends from the mouth to the dog's anus. Along the way this tube is modified in shape and size to allow digestion, storage, and absorption. There are also a number of other organs such as the liver and pancreas that assist digestion by manufacturing and delivering enzymes and other substances that help break the food down into usable elements.

The Mouth

The digestion of food begins in the mouth, with the teeth responsible for grabbing onto food and moving it into the mouth. The first step of digestion is the chewing of the food which mechanically breaks it into smaller pieces and mixes it with saliva. Saliva contains some enzymes which help to begin the digestion process and also lubricates the food for its trip down to the stomach.

Dental health is something that is often overlooked in greyhounds, with a high level of dental and periodontal disease seen even in young dogs. This is thought to be largely due to the greyhound's diet being soft and not requiring a lot of chewing and because greyhounds are not often given raw bones or other dental type items to chew on.

Dental disease can become a source of infection to the rest of the body as the bacteria in the mouth slowly leech into bloodstream. The low grade infection that results can certainly affect the performance of the greyhound and can lead to elevated white cell counts as the body tries to deal with the constant assault. Poor dental health can also lead to foul smelling breath.

The Stomach

Food that is swallowed is passed down to the stomach of the greyhound. The stomach acts as a 'storage sac' where food is mixed with acid and enzymes to further break down the food. The stomach has a muscular wall and the contraction of the muscles helps to mix the food and acid together, before releasing it gradually into the small intestine.



The Small Intestine

Once the food has been broken down and mixed with the enzymes and acid of the stomach, it is released into the small intestine. The small intestine is a long narrow tube with a lining that is specially designed to allow the uptake of nutrients. It is actually here in the small intestine that most of the digestion process takes place. Powerful enzymes from the pancreas are added to the mix, along with bile from the liver. The enzymes break down protein and carbohydrates, and the bile is involved in the breakdown of fats. The release of both bile and enzymes occurs when the food moves into the small intestine from the stomach.

Once the food is broken down into its basic elements, the body can then absorb the required nutrients from the 'slurry' that is produced. Sugars, amino acids, vitamins, minerals, and fats are all absorbed at this point as the food moves through the small intestine.

The Large Intestine

As the food continues along the intestines it moves into the large intestine. This is so called as it is a larger size tube than the small intestine. Some further absorption of nutrients occurs in the large intestine, but it is mainly where water is absorbed into the body. This uptake of fluids ensures that the body retains vital water, and that the fluids used in the digestion process are not simply lost to the body.

Towards the end of the large intestine, the waste matter will start to firm, and can be stored until the dog is ready to 'empty out'. The large intestine also produces a mucous that assists with the passing of faecal matter.

Common Problems of Digestion

Vomiting and Diarrhoea

Vomiting and Diarrhoea are both a form of protective mechanism for the body. If an animal eats food that is rotten or ingests toxic matter, vomiting helps the body rid itself of the substance. Similarly, diarrhoea can hasten the passing of matter through the alimentary tract.

Although they can be considered normal in some cases, vomiting and diarrhoea are also common symptoms of many more serious illnesses. Vomiting and diarrhoea can be caused by sudden diet changes, viral infection, bacteria, parasites and other causes. It is important that you notice quickly any vomiting or changes to the faeces of greyhounds in your care, especially if they are housed with other greyhounds. Many of the causes of vomiting and diarrhoea can be passed from one greyhound to another, especially if the kennels are not thoroughly cleaned.

As a rule one or two vomits may not be anything to be concerned about ***provided*** the dog is otherwise bright and alert and is drinking adequately. Stopping all food and ensuring that they are drinking small amounts of fluids regularly is the first step if you have a vomiting dog. You must then closely observe the dog for signs of discomfort, abdominal swelling (as occurs in bloat), and watch its general demeanour. If the greyhound looks unwell, has a swollen abdomen or is refusing to drink, then the greyhound needs to be examined by a veterinarian immediately. Repeated vomiting can quickly dehydrate the greyhound, and also causes electrolyte imbalances and early intervention is best. In cases of bloat, every second counts!! If the greyhound looks lively, and is drinking, then you can wait up to 24 hours for improvement, but must then seek veterinary assistance to determine why the vomiting has not resolved.

Diarrhoea that is very watery or has blood in it is a definite concern and should be investigated immediately. If the faeces are simply not formed, or soft, then it is reasonable to change the dog to a bland diet for 24 hours and ensure that it continues to drink well to ensure that hydration remains adequate. Some dogs are very sensitive to things such as diet changes, and will have soft faeces for a day or two if you switch food brands or suppliers.

If there have been no changes to the diet, then diarrhoea may be a symptom of something more serious. In highly anxious greyhounds, the stress of travel or other 'events' can sometimes lead to diarrhoea, but this is usually fairly obvious as the diarrhoea occurs at the time of the stressful event, and usually resolves once the greyhound returns to its normal kennel environment. If the greyhound is bright and the diarrhoea continues for more than 24-48 hours, or at any time the greyhound looks uncomfortable and is straining to defaecate, then you should immediately have the dog checked by a veterinarian.

Parasites

There are a number of the intestinal worms that can cause problems with digestion. Ensuring that you have an effective and reliable parasite treatment program is very important to ensure that you are not contributing to problems within the digestive system. Intestinal worms not only rob the greyhound of vital nutrients, they also can cause damage to the lining of the alimentary tract. This can lead to blood in the droppings, severe diarrhoea, and loss of condition.

It is vital that any worming program covers all of the important intestinal worms, and the product's active ingredient is intermittently altered to prevent the worms from becoming resistant to any one product. Speak to your greyhound veterinarian about a reliable worming program.

Bloat (Gastric Dilation Volvulus or GDV)

Bloat can occur in any large, deep-chested breed of dog. For some reason, the normal filling and emptying process of the stomach becomes altered, and gas accumulates. The stomach is anchored to the body in such a way that if it fills up with air it actually twists and this can lead to the life threatening condition commonly called bloat.

If the stomach actually twists it not only causes pain and discomfort, it also cuts off the blood flow to the stomach. It does not take very long for the weakened and stretched stomach wall to die if it has no blood supply, leading to a rupture of the stomach. Bloat can kill a dog very quickly, so getting help urgently is a priority if the greyhound is to be saved. Even with surgery, some dogs die from complications, so the earlier you notice a dog with a distended abdomen the better.

Although the true reason that dogs bloat has never been proven, it is certainly linked to stressful events and excessive eating (i.e. if a dog gets into the food supply and gorges itself). It has also been suggested that there may be a link to exercise immediately before or after eating, and to sudden food changes. In some breeds there is a definite 'genetic predisposition' with certain lines bloating more than others.

Obstruction

Obstruction is most likely to occur in greyhounds who eat and destroy bedding, or who chew on rocks or the like in their runs or kennels. Certain objects are the correct shape and texture to lodge in the alimentary tract, and once lodged prevent the movement of food through the body. Obstructions can be complete (more severe signs) or partial. Probably the most dangerous item is the corn cob - it is the perfect shape and size and has a rough surface which prevents it from being moved along - so make sure that you never place them in the compost or where the dogs may have access.

The most common symptoms are abdominal pain (dog is sore in the tummy, and may be 'hunched up'), vomiting and a reduction in faeces (as nothing is getting past). If you have a dog that is at risk of getting an obstruction, it is important to choose bedding and kennel items accordingly. If you suspect that the greyhound has eaten something that may cause an obstruction it is important that you let your vet know so they can advise you accordingly. Some items that cause a severe blockage may have to be removed surgically, and it is important to get to them early to prevent damage to the bowel wall.



11.3 – The Circulatory System

The Circulatory System

The circulatory system of the greyhound includes all of the arteries, veins and capillaries that carry blood around the body to each individual cell and the heart which acts as the pump for the system. It also includes the blood itself which carries important things such as oxygen and nutrients around the body.

The Heart

The heart is located inside the chest cavity of the greyhound along with the lungs. The heart in the greyhound is larger in comparison to other dogs of a similar size. This is partly due to exercise and conditioning, but there is also a genetic influence as greyhounds have been selected over time for athletic performance.

The heart is made up of muscle and has four chambers. When the heart muscle relaxes blood enters the chambers, and when it contracts, a set of one way valves ensure that the blood is pushed out of the chambers in a set direction. Blood is first pumped to the lungs where it picks up oxygen, and then returns to the heart before being pumped out to the body to deliver the oxygen to the various organs, before returning to complete the cycle again.

The rate at which the heart pumps is controlled by areas in the brain. The heart rate (beats per minute) increases when the needs of the body increase - such as during exercise or times of stress - and decreases at rest.

There are a number of ways to evaluate the heart and its ability to function properly. Veterinarians will listen to the sounds that the heart makes using a stethoscope. This gives them information about the heart rate and rhythm, and any variation in the normal sounds can indicate how well the valves in the heart are functioning. It is also possible to examine the electrical currents that control the beating of the heart using an ECG (electro-cardiogram) machine. This gives information about the actual mechanism that triggers the heart beat, and can show signs suggesting certain abnormalities.

The heart shape and size can be evaluated with an x-ray, but the best information about size and shape is gained from an ultrasound examination of the heart - called an echocardiogram. During the ultrasound examination the valves can be observed, and it is possible to measure the thickness of the walls of the heart and the size of the chambers.

The Blood Vessels

This is the 'piping' that carries the blood around the body. Arteries carry blood away from the heart, and veins carry blood back to the heart. The capillaries are the tiny vessels that join the arteries to the veins. The capillaries are where oxygen, nutrients and other important things move out of the blood into the cells of the body, and waste products are picked up so that they can be transported out of the body.

The amount of blood delivered to any particular area or organ is controlled by a complex mechanism linked to sensors in the brain. When a greyhound runs, its muscles are suddenly doing a lot of work, and have a high requirement for energy and oxygen. The capillaries in the muscles open up allowing more nutrients and oxygen to be delivered to the muscle fibres. At the same time other areas of the body that are not 'busy' will have a reduced flow of blood as the body shifts blood to the areas that need it most.

The blood flow is also involved in the temperature regulation of the greyhound's body. When the body temperature rises, blood flow is directed to the skin and lungs to allow for heat to dissipate. When the body temperature falls, circulation to the extremities is shut off or slowed down to help maintain heat to the body core.

It is possible to assess heart rate by feeling for the increase in pressure that occurs in an artery as the heart forces blood into the system (the pulse). One of the easiest places to feel a pulse is the large artery inside the thigh of the greyhound - the femoral pulse. By counting the number of beats each minute it is possible to monitor the heart rate at rest, after strenuous exercise, and also the recovery over time.

The Blood

The blood of the greyhound can be considered a truly amazing thing. It carries oxygen from the lungs to the body, and picks up the carbon dioxide and takes it back to the lungs. It carries nutrients from the gut to the cells, and picks up waste products and takes them to the liver and kidneys so they can be removed. It carries important chemical messengers such as hormones, and is also involved in the first line attack on disease and infection.

The blood is made up of a liquid portion, the plasma, along with Red Blood Cells (involved in oxygen exchange), White Blood Cells (involved in immunity) and various hormones, nutrients, clotting agents, buffers, anti-bodies and enzymes. The levels of all of these things in the blood is constantly changing to meet the requirements of the individual, so blood evaluation can often give us important clues as to the general health and well-being of the greyhound.





Blood Tests

There are an increasing number of blood tests available, either as 'on-site' tests at your veterinarian's, or at a veterinary pathology laboratory. Obviously those tests that are done on-site give quicker results but the vet will need to have special machines to do this. For less common, or more complicated tests, the blood sample may need to be sent away for testing, with the results usually returning within 24 hours.

Blood testing can give an indication of how the various organ systems are functioning, whether the body is mounting a response to an infection, and the levels of the various electrolytes and waste products in the blood. Blood tests need to be 'interpreted' to make sense as sometimes a change in one area can affect other test results. The printed report from the blood test will have a set of reference values which are considered the normal results for a greyhound. Your dog's results will then be compared to these expected normal values, and any variations will be highlighted.

Some normal value ranges are quite large and it is possible to have a 'normal' value that is close to the top or the bottom of the range that might be significant. Sometimes it is more useful to compare two results from different times from the one dog, rather than to compare the dog to the normal values. This way the changes to the various test values gives an indication of what is happening in the dog's body at that time.

Heartworm

Although there is a low incidence of Heartworm in Victoria, it is an increasing problem in the more northern states of Australia. This is something to consider if you plan to race your dog(s) in Queensland or New South Wales where heartworm is more common. Heartworm is transmitted by mosquito (no dog to dog contact is required!) and is quite difficult to treat once the adult heartworms have lodged in the chambers of the heart. Luckily, the heartworm larvae take quite a while to reach maturity after the dog becomes infected, and are easily controlled in the early stages.

The symptoms of heartworm are similar to those of Chronic Heart Failure - the greyhound will have an enlarged heart, circulation problems, lack of energy, and a moist cough. These symptoms come about because the adult heartworms clog up the chambers of the heart, and even the major vessels, making it very difficult for the heart to pump the blood around the body. There are a variety of Heartworm 'preventatives' available so speak to your greyhound veterinarian about preventing this crippling disease.



11.4 – The Respiratory System

The Respiratory System

The respiratory system of the greyhound includes all of the air passages and tubes that carry air from the nose and mouth to the lungs. The respiratory system is responsible for bringing oxygen into the body where it is used by the cells for energy. The respiratory system is an exchange system - exchanging oxygen and carbon dioxide. The oxygen is taken up by the red blood cells and transported by the bloodstream to the cells where it is needed. The cells use the oxygen and produce carbon dioxide as a waste product. The carbon dioxide is then taken by the bloodstream back to the lungs where it is expelled to the air.

Respiration is controlled by special areas in the brain that monitor the blood levels of carbon dioxide. These special receptors are triggered when the carbon dioxide levels rise and the result is an increase in the rate and depth of respiration. Respiration is also involved in temperature control, with water being lost in the exhaled air. This is used as an evaporative cooling mechanism by the greyhound. If the greyhound gets too hot, the rate of respiration rises to increase the amount of evaporative cooling that takes place and hence the temperature of the dog will lower.

The respiratory system uses the concentrations of the various gases in the air to drive the exchange rather than selectively targeting oxygen. If the oxygen concentration in the air is higher than in the blood, the oxygen will move across to the blood stream. Because the exchange is not selective, other gases can enter the bloodstream - such as carbon monoxide from car exhausts or toxic substances from cigarette smoke.

The respiratory system is also responsible for generating sound. As air moves through the larynx (or 'voice box') it can be used to generate barks, whines and howls and this provides an important part of the communication abilities of the greyhound. The larynx is also responsible for protecting the lungs from food and fluid via the 'gag reflex'. If food or fluids moves into the larynx, a response is triggered that leads to a cough or gag - the same as in people when 'something goes down the wrong way'. This protective mechanism may be altered when the greyhound is puffing hard after a race (with its larynx fully open), and it can mean that when offered a drink from the hose some water goes into the airways triggering a coughing spasm.

Finally, the respiratory system is also involved in assisting with the pH levels in the blood.



Other things that may affect respiration

The rate of respiration can also be altered by the mental state of the animal. Animals that are stressed, frightened, or anxious tend to breathe faster or pant, even when the weather is not hot. Some animals will have a similar response when excited and anticipating an event (another form of stress).

Too much barking or panting can change the pH of the blood, and can upset the blood levels of oxygen and carbon dioxide. This can be a problem with dogs who will not settle when travelling, or who bark constantly when they are kennelled for a race. This can lead to respiratory alkalosis (an increase in pH of the blood due to the excessive loss of carbon dioxide) which can then predispose the greyhound to other problems if they race, or trial hard.

Diseases of the Respiratory System

Probably the most common respiratory disease is *Canine Cough* (also called Kennel Cough). Canine Cough can be caused by a number of infective agents including viruses (most commonly Canine Parainfluenza) and bacteria (*Bordetella Bronchiseptica*). Canine cough is highly contagious and will quickly spread from one animal to another if they share the same air space. It is possible to vaccinate against the two major causes of this disease (included in a C5 vaccine), but because there are other agents involved it is still possible for vaccinated animals to show signs of canine cough.

In most cases Canine Cough resolves by itself. Dogs have a dry hacking cough for a week or so, and may be lethargic or off their food. During this time they will be off colour, and should not be raced or trialled as they will struggle to cope with the increased demands for oxygen. Any increase in respiratory rate can also trigger coughing spasms as the windpipes are inflamed and sensitive. You know yourself that when you have a cold even climbing a flight of stairs can leave you breathless, let alone trying to run a race!!

If you notice any coughing, it is important to try to isolate the affected dogs as soon as possible to try to limit the spread of the disease. It is possible for greyhounds to be infected and to spread the disease to other dogs before showing any symptoms such as coughing, so sometimes it is difficult to stop the spread of this disease, especially in larger kennels.

Remember: Coughing is a symptom of many diseases not just Canine Cough (for example tonsillitis, pneumonia and heart failure all cause coughing too). It is advisable to have the reason for any cough properly investigated by a veterinarian to ensure you are doing the right thing, and that any greyhound that is coughing gets the right treatment.

Tonsillitis is another common respiratory problem. The tonsils are actually part of the body's defence system, responding to infection in the throat and mouth areas. When they are not fighting infection they sit neatly in a little pouch (called a 'crypt') at the back of the throat and can barely be seen. But when inflamed they enlarge, become red and swollen, and can usually be seen quite easily in the back of the throat if the dog allows its mouth to be held open.

Enlarged and inflamed tonsils can be quite painful, and the dog may gag or cough, especially as it tries to swallow. Some dogs may go off their food, often running to the food bowl as if they are hungry, but then being reluctant to eat. Tonsillitis may or may not affect racing performance, but is more likely to become a problem if the dog is racing over longer distances as there is a greater demand placed on the respiratory system. There are a number of causes for tonsillitis including infection. If you can see your greyhound's tonsils, consult with your greyhound vet about an appropriate course of treatment.

After A Race

As a greyhound runs it not only has a huge increase in the need for oxygen, it also generates a lot of heat in the muscles. For this reason, the respiration rate after a race is very high as the body tries to not only restore the correct oxygen levels to the body, but also to cool itself.

It is very important that your greyhound is gradually brought up in fitness so as not to overload its system. Dogs that are out of condition tend to 'puff a lot harder' after a run, and often struggle to meet the demands of their body which then can lead to other problems. After a run, the greyhound needs to be cooled down properly and nothing should be allowed to inhibit or constrict its breathing - such as a tight collar!

When the dog's breathing has started to settle it can be offered a drink of water but be careful not to squirt water into its mouth in such a way that it triggers the gag reflex or causes the greyhound to cough. Not all greyhounds will want to drink so do not force them - they will drink when they are ready. It may be useful to time how long the recovery phase takes so that it then becomes possible to compare how the individual greyhound pulls up after each run. This is especially important as you step up the distance that the dog is trialling over as its fitness improves.





Chapter 12

12.1 – Advanced Greyhound Training

Dealing with Problems In Training

As a trainer, it is great when everything goes to plan but sometimes problems are encountered along the way, either with parts of the training sequence, or due to times where training cannot occur. The most common problems experienced are the minor set backs in your training plans that are due to illness and injury. How you handle these events will directly affect your chances of successfully returning the greyhound to full racing fitness.

Good trainers are always aware of what is happening in their kennels and are able to modify the training programs of individual dogs to suit their current health and fitness. By doing this they never place undue stress on the dogs and consequently, the dogs are able to perform to the peak of their ability. On the other hand, trainers who ignore signs of problems developing, or who train every dog in the same manner, are unlikely to have success due to the stresses they place on the dogs and their body systems.

Illness and Injury

It is vital that you are constantly aware of how each greyhound in your care is health-wise. Early detection of illness or injury means that the problem can be addressed when it is only a small problem, rather than waiting until it becomes a more serious problem. Watching each greyhound closely for signs of vomiting, diarrhoea, condition changes, altered behaviour and gait can mean that you detect a problem straight away. If you suspect something is not right, you can then monitor even closer to see if the problem shows signs of worsening. Your observation skills and those of your staff are very important.

Early detection of illness can also mean that you can isolate the unwell greyhound from any others that you have on your property, potentially preventing the spread of disease from one greyhound to another.

If an injury is suspected, a thorough physical examination should be undertaken, and if needed, the opinion of a greyhound veterinarian should be sought. This way the actual injury can be fully explored and you will be able to get the correct advice on rehabilitation and recovery from a reliable source. Be careful following the advice of self-proclaimed 'experts' at the track. Although many trainers are very experienced, getting the wrong advice ends up costing you both time and money.

It is very important that any greyhound that is unwell or injured is rested until it is fully recovered. It may be that the dog can still have free-galloping exercise or restricted exercise, but you certainly would not want to race or trial the dog until it had completely recovered. Any illness or injury should be recorded in the greyhound's record file as well, as this can help you to plot the recovery and also to watch for recurring problems.

Returning a Greyhound to Racing after Injury or Illness

Once you have your veterinarian's all clear for a return to training, it is important that you bring the greyhound back into race fitness **SLOWLY**. Even if the greyhound was racing once a week over 500m prior to the illness or injury, you would probably start with a period of gradually increasing free-galloping, followed by a few short hand slips at the trial track. Over a number of weeks the distance can be slowly increased again to the pre-illness or injury distance provided that the greyhound pulls up well after each run.

If the greyhound does not recover well from run there is no point increasing the distance until you fully address the fitness issues and check for signs of any further injury. Extra special care should be taken in the post-race examination of any greyhound returning from a period of reduced work to ensure that any problems are noted, no matter how insignificant they may seem.

Dealing with Problem Behaviours

If you have done your early training well you should have little problem with the race sequence as it will develop over time. Occasionally, a greyhound will have a bad experience and this will affect its performance the next time it runs. This might be a problem that occurs in the boxes making the dog harder to load, or a bad race fall that affects the dog's confidence in future runs.

If you have detected the beginning of a problem behaviour it is best to stop trying to achieve the end product and to go back to basics and deal with the area that the dog is having problems with. It may be that you have to go right back to the start and retrain that part of the sequence all over again. If you don't address the problem, the greyhound will be rehearsing the incorrect behaviour and it will soon become a habit that is almost impossible to break.

Remember that it is your job to ensure that the greyhound only has positive and pleasant experiences, and if you notice something bad happen, you should immediately step in to remedy the situation by making the association a good one again.

An example is a greyhound that is having a problem at the boxes after a bad experience during a race. If you continue to race the dog, it will remember the bad experience and may be difficult to load into the boxes. Because you have a time limit to load the dog at the start of a race you then push the dog in roughly which gets the job done, but gives the dog a second bad experience. The next time it will probably be even harder to load, and it won't be long before the stewards step in and force you to address the problem.

A better solution would be to stop racing the dog for a few weeks whilst you go back to making the boxes pleasant. If you are worried about the dog losing fitness, you can hand slip it at the trial track until it is once again happy to go into the boxes. You may have to go right back to loading the dog in backwards and focussing it on its motivating toy, just like you did when the dog was just learning the boxes. There are lots of ways to make the box experience a pleasant one again. Once the greyhound is loading easily, you can then add the boxes back into the racing sequence and return to racing.

The same applies to any problem. First ask yourself - What is the problem? Then - How can I break the exercise down and help the greyhound have success again? Finally, it is vital that you do not get rough with a greyhound or lose your temper, as this will do nothing to improve the behaviour of the dog, and will instead make the dog more difficult to handle in the future. Some greyhounds also associate the punishment with the location that it occurs, resulting in them becoming fearful of the trial or race track, or fearful when approaching the box area.



What should you do if you can't seem to fix the problem?

If you have tried to rehabilitate a greyhound with a problem, but are finding that you are not having success, you may want to re-consider your options. In many cases you might have success by sending the dog to another, more experienced, trainer or one that has had success with the problem you are having. You will want to discuss what they plan to do to ensure that you are able to follow up when the dog returns to you and you will need to use some discretion in regards to the methods they plan to use. If you don't feel comfortable with what they propose, ask another trainer.

Setting a greyhound for a feature race

Hopefully your success as a trainer will allow you to consider setting one of your dog's for a feature race. You need to think carefully about the distance over which the feature will be run, and be clear on whether there are heats and finals or just a single race.

If your greyhound is racing regularly, it may be that you rest it for a period in the lead up to a feature race. A short rest allows the greyhound to fully recover from any nagging injuries, and they often return to racing fresher and keener than if they were continually 'up'. If you are going to rest the greyhound prior to a feature race, you will have to allow time to return the dog to race fitness after the spell. This means you will have to have a definite plan over a number of weeks or months of where you would like the dog to be in regards to its training and fitness.

If you keep good records of each campaign, you will already have a good idea of what weight the dog will need to be and how long it takes to come back to full fitness. You will also have a good idea of the performance times and indicators that will tell you when the dog is peaking.

If the feature race is to be held interstate, you will also need to consider the travel stress and recovery from travel times for the individual greyhound. Some greyhounds are great travellers others do not travel well, so this will be a factor in choosing which races to target with each dog. It is far more difficult to win interstate with a poor traveller, unless you give the dog time to settle before racing. This may entail leaving a week or more early and continuing your training at the track you will run on. This way, if the greyhound is off colour for a few days he has time to be rested and can recover before being expected to race.

It is every trainer's dream to win a major race with one of their greyhounds. With some careful planning, good records and a handy dog, it may just be that the person accepting the trophy will be you!



Chapter 12.2 – Use of Medications

Rules applying to the use of medications

GAR 83 Racing Greyhound to be Drug Free

GAR 84 Possession of Drugs

Understanding Medications and their Use

The rules of racing state that a greyhound must be presented to race 'drug free', and that the trainer of a greyhound that returns a positive swab shall be guilty of an offence. The one exception to this rule is the use of the drug *ethyloestrenol* when prescribed by a veterinarian to be given for the purpose of suppressing oestrus in the bitch.

It is therefore very important as a trainer that you fully understand the nature and proper use of any medications you use. This includes legitimate medications prescribed by a veterinarian as well as any natural therapies, nutraceuticals, or supplements that you give your greyhounds.

It is inevitable at some time during your training career you will have a sick or injured greyhound that is prescribed medication to help it recover, to reduce pain or to fight a disease process. Medications can be administered in a number of different ways - orally, topically (applied to the skin, or affected area directly), or by injection. In most cases, the body absorbs or 'takes up' the medication and it will travel via the bloodstream to have its effect. Almost immediately, other systems begin working to excrete the medication either via the liver or kidneys - this is why urine is often used for drug detection.

Every medication will have a period of time during which it will be able to be detected by laboratory tests. The level in the dog's system may be well below the 'therapeutic level' required for an effect in the body, but it is still present and may lead to a positive swab. Testing protocols are continually developing and evolving, with labs now able to detect much smaller amounts of the drugs and their metabolites as their equipment and testing procedures get more sophisticated.



Why must greyhounds run drug free?

It is vital for the integrity of the sport that all greyhounds are racing on a level playing field and that punters can bet on a greyhound knowing that it has every chance of a fair run. It is also important that breeders of greyhounds can select their breeding animals based on their true performance, rather than results that are due to artificial enhancements.

Racing drug free is also critical to the welfare of the greyhounds, ensuring that they are not presented to race whilst ill or injured. If they have been unwell, greyhounds should be allowed to fully recover from any illness or injury then undergo training to restore their fitness to racing levels prior to being entered in another race. Trainers who think they are being clever by using pain relieving medications may mask the pain sufficiently to get the dog to run, but the risk to the dog of re-injuring, worsening the injury, or completely breakdown is significant and unacceptable.

What is a 'with-holding period' or 'clearance time'?

Every medication has a defined 'curve' of effect - from the time that it enters the body to the time the last detectable molecule leaves the dog's system - the concentration of the drug within the body can be charted. The time taken to achieve the completion of this curve will depend on the drug, the method of administration, the dosage, and its method of excretion. Some drugs take a long time to 'clear' the body, others are metabolised quite quickly. Drugs that are 'lipid soluble' (can dissolve in fats) tend to take longer to clear as they get stored in fat reserves throughout the body.

From this information about the medication we can predict when a drug will have disappeared and no longer be detected in the body. Hence the 'clearance time' suggests how long it will take a particular medication to leave the greyhound's system. The clearance time is an estimate only as individual animals do differ in how well they process medication. If the dog's liver or kidneys are not working well, if they are carrying excess fat, if the dosage given was more than it should be, or the course of treatment was long, then the clearance time may be increased.

A 'withholding period' is the time that an animal should be excluded from the sport based on the medication given. It is usually longer than the clearance time, allowing for some variability between individuals. The withholding time indicates the time when the majority of greyhounds have completely cleared the drug from their system. Withholding times, like clearance times, are also estimates but give a guideline for trainers and veterinarians as to how long the greyhound is likely to return a positive swab.

There are charts available that list common medications given to greyhounds and their withholding times. It is important to remember that as the trainer, you are the person responsible for ensuring your greyhound does not return a positive swab, and is truly fit and ready to race!

PRESCRIPTION ANIMAL REMEDY
KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN
FOR ANIMAL TREATMENT ONLY

Using Prescription Medications

Prescription medications are usually dispensed by your veterinarian for a particular problem in a particular greyhound. You will be given written instructions as to how the medication is to be administered, how often, and by which route as well as how it needs to be stored. The amount supplied will be enough for a complete 'course' and it is important that you give the greyhound all of its intended doses.

Drugs in this category are generally those that fall into Schedule 4 (S4) or Schedule 8 (S8) and are only available by prescription. There are strict rules about dispensing and supplying them and the veterinarian must have a bona fide relationship with the client and patient. This means you cannot ask for them over the counter and the veterinarian must establish that there is a genuine need for these medications in the patient. Because there are such tight rules about prescribing S4 medications, having any prescription medicine in your possession which is not correctly labelled is illegal.

Prescription medications include antibiotics, most anti-inflammatories, anabolic steroids, corticosteroids, hormones and anaesthetics. Your greyhound veterinarian will have an excellent understanding of the medications, their effects, side-effects, possible complications and interactions with other medications and will choose which medication to prescribe accordingly.

You should not administer any medication prescribed for one greyhound to another without first consulting your veterinarian. Many owners and trainers think they might play 'vet' and dose a sick greyhound with medication 'left over' from another dog. This may mean the greyhound receives the wrong dose, or a dose of out-of-date medication and you will be assuming that the problem is identical when in fact it rarely is. Giving the wrong medication can worsen the original problem, or may promote resistance to the medication.

Using Non-Prescription Medications

There are a number of other medications which are available without prescription. This includes medications that can be sold at the pharmacy, or through other outlets such as pet stores and produce merchants. There are sometimes medications that form part of supplements or liniments that are considered 'drugs' but are not 'prescription' drugs.

It is important that you are aware of their presence as they can be the cause of drug interactions (where one drug has an effect on another either causing one or both not to work properly, or by causing one or both to become toxic within the body), as well as possible positive swabs.

Similar to prescription medications it is important that any dosage guidelines are followed, and the correct dose (not more or less) is given at the correct interval, and by the correct route. Storage is also important, with many products requiring specific storage conditions to maintain efficacy. Using out of date or poorly stored medications can be not only dangerous to the animal, but may not have the desired effect.

Antibiotic Resistance - your role

Around the world, there is a gradual increase in the resistance of some bacteria to antibiotic medications. This is a huge problem as it affects not only animals but also humans. There are now bacteria that do not respond to treatment and continue to cause disease despite treatment with the strongest drugs we know.

Resistance is something that develops when a population of bacteria are not killed completely by a treatment - often because the dosage was incorrect, or the therapeutic levels were not achieved for long enough. When this happens, the 'susceptible' bacteria in the population causing the disease are killed but the 'strongest' bacteria, those with some resistance, survive and go on to re-populate. This leads to a change in the infection from one that was largely susceptible to antibiotics to one that is now made up mainly of the more resistant types - you are actually selecting for resistance. Over time, repeated courses of antibiotics that are given incorrectly can lead to the development of increasingly resistant bacteria, and suddenly you have a disease that is more difficult to cure.

Often the reason that a trainer finishes a course of antibiotics early is because the dog looks better. They do not realise that they are setting themselves up for a more difficult problem in the future. This is why it is important to finish every course of antibiotics, whether the dog looks better or not. A full course is far more likely to kill all of the bacteria, and completely resolve the problem, leaving nothing to come back and haunt you!



What Do I Need to Do Now?

Having now learned more about the added responsibilities of training greyhounds for others, and learning more about the greyhound's themselves, we wish you success in your role as a Public Trainer.

Formal completion of this Level 3 competency package along with Level 1 & 2 is required before you are allowed to register as an 'Public Trainer'. You will need to fill out an 'Application to become a Trainer' form and submit it to GRV, along with your answers to the assessment questions for Level 3, along with the completed assessment sheets for Levels 1 and 2 if you haven't already completed them previously.

If you have any questions regarding registration or completion of the competency levels, please call our Member Services Department on (03) 8329 1100

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