

HOUND MYTHS



Greyhounds (c.1500) Gaston Phoebus, Book of the Hunt

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OLDER GREYHOUNDS NEED LOW PROTEIN "SENIOR" DIETS.

- With greyhounds, we're usually trying to keep weight on the oldsters, not off them.
- Low protein diets may cause muscle wasting and weight loss.

GREYHOUNDS WITH HIGH CREATININES ARE GOING INTO KIDNEY FAILURE AND NEED LOW PROTEIN "KIDNEY" DIETS.

- Increased creatinine does not equal kidney disease if the BUN and urine concentration are normal.
- A 2000 Auburn study found that greyhound creatinines normally run up to 1.6X "other dog" creatinine.

GREYHOUNDS WITH DIARRHEA SHOULD BE SWITCHED TO HIGH FIBER FOOD (I.E. W/D).

- This approach often backfires with greyhounds, who do better on meat based diets.
- Grain based diets or the simple switch from racing diets to kibble are often the cause of diarrhea.

BARF (BONES AND RAW FOOD) DIET IS DANGEROUS, NOT ADEQUATE, ETC.

- If you're willing to do the research and "cooking," BARF is superior nutrition.
- Other benefits - clean teeth, firm stools, may help with allergies.

ALABAMA ROT ONLY HAPPENS TO TRACK GREYHOUNDS FROM EATING THE RAW 4D MEAT.

- The strain of e. coli that causes Alabama Rot is found in everything from apples to alfalfa sprouts.

FEED SEVERAL SMALL MEALS DAILY / FEED FROM RAISED FEEDERS / MAKE HIM EAT SLOW / TO PREVENT BLOAT.

- Bloat is mostly genetic and much more common in show (AKC) greyhound lines.
- Racers gobble one meal daily from a bowl on the floor and rarely bloat.

LEAVE HIM IN THE HOSPITAL UNTIL HE EATS.

- Greyhounds are sensitive dogs.
- Unless they're doing something for him there that you can't do at home, he'll likely eat better at home where he's happy and you can bribe him with tempting cookery.
- Take him in for daily rechecks if needed.

THE FECAL IS NEGATIVE - HE DOESN'T HAVE WORMS.

- Fecals are often negative, especially for whipworms.
- If a greyhound has had diarrhea ever since he came off the track, de-worm with Panacur before doing further diagnostics. Don't have the \$1,000 case of whipworms.

GREYHOUNDS GET SO MANY VACCINATIONS AT THE TRACK THAT ADOPTION GROUPS SHOULD NOT REVACCINATE.

- It's hard to count on vaccines that were supposedly given - requirements vary tremendously from state to state.
- I prefer 2 consecutive years of "known shots," then go to every 3 years if that is your preference.

DOGS NEED BOOSTER VACCINES EVERY YEAR.

- Many veterinarians and a majority of veterinary schools have safely gone to every 3 year vaccinations.

YEARLY DENTALS ARE THE BEST WAY TO KEEP YOUR GREYHOUND'S TEETH HEALTHY.

- Brushing at least every other day is the best way to keep your greyhound's teeth healthy.

- BARF, chewies, turkey necks - all is preferable to knocking off tartar once yearly while the dog spends the other 9-10 months with dental disease.
- Dentals should be done when needed, but should not be the mainstay of dental care.

DO ALL YOU CAN TO SAVE BAD TEETH - YOU DON'T WANT TO LOSE THEM.

- Bad teeth hurt - get them out of there!
- Bad teeth form a nidus for infection which can damage kidneys and heart valves.
- Dogs with bad teeth often feel like new dogs once they're extracted.

HIS HEART IS ENLARGED.

- The greyhound heart is normally much bigger than the heart of other dogs.
- There is a huge left ventricular hypertrophy (thickening of wall) - same with marathon runners.
- An ultrasound can differentiate normal from diseased if in doubt.

HIS HEART RATE IS ABNORMALLY SLOW.

- The greyhound's heart rate is slower than other dogs - again, due to athleticism.
- 60-90 is normal at rest, it may be faster if excited (like at the vet's office).

HIS BLOOD PRESSURE IS HIGH.

- Greyhounds often run blood pressures on the high end of normal (160,170,180).
- They can be higher if excited - again, an important consideration at the vet's office.

HE NEEDS A COMPLETE CARDIAC WORKUP FOR THIS HEART MURMUR.

- Low grade murmurs (I & II) are common in greyhounds - they are almost always benign.
- Take a chest x-ray if concerned (where you will see a "big heart!").

YOUR GREYHOUND HAS POLYCYTHEMIA.

- Greyhounds have a higher HCT or PCV than other dogs, normally in the 50's - 60's.
- HCT or PCV can easily go into the 70's if they're dehydrated.
- Actual polycythemia vera is a very rare disease.

HER PLATELETS ARE ABNORMALLY LOW.

- Greyhounds can normally run low platelets - all the way down to 80,000 - 110,000.
- Ehrlichia can lower platelets (also lowers WBC and HCT/PCV) - titer if in doubt.

WE NEED A BONE MARROW BIOPSY TO SEE IF THIS LOW WBC IS CANCER.

- Greyhounds normally run lower WBCs (3,000 - 10,000) than other dogs (7,500 - 15,000).
- An Auburn study of 50 retired racers (March 2000 Compendium) found a range of 1,800-14,600.

HE CAN'T HAVE A TBD (TICK BORNE DISEASE), WE DON'T HAVE THOSE AROUND HERE.

- Greyhounds have a disproportionate incidence of TBDs due to their years on dog farms and in racing kennels, sharing ticks with greyhounds from all over the country.
- Ehrlichia can take 5-7 years following a tick bite to show symptoms.

THAT EHRlichia TITER IS TOO LOW TO TREAT.

- Treat any ehrlichia titer - the severity of signs does not always correlate with titer.
- The alternative is waiting for a bleedout - there is too much to lose.
- Veterinarians working with adopted greyhounds should maintain a high index of suspicion for ehrlichia.

IMIZOL IS DANGEROUS.

- Imizol is safe but not familiar to many veterinarians.
- Imizol is labeled to kill babesia but also kills ehrlichia.

A LOW T4 MEANS SHE NEEDS TO BE ON THYROID SUPPLEMENT.

- Greyhounds normally run lower T4s than other breeds (about half is a good rule of thumb).
- They should not be on supplement unless there are clinical signs - too many greyhounds are needlessly on lifelong supplement.
- Use half of the normal dog dose.
- Sick dogs commonly have low T4s ("sick euthyroid") - the dog is not hypothyroid.

BALD BUTTS ARE BECAUSE THEY'RE HYPOTHYROID.

- The cause of bald thigh syndrome is unknown.
- Bald thighs are seen with both low and high thyroid levels.

BALD BUTTS ARE FROM LAYING IN CRATES AT THE TRACK.

- Greyhounds who have never been crated or to the track have bald butts.

HE HAS A TOENAIL FUNGUS.

- SLO (symmetrical lupoid onychodystrophy) aka "pemphigus" is the autoimmune condition that causes greyhounds to lose multiple nails.
- Treat as directed in Care of the Racing Greyhound.

THIS FEMALE IS THE FIRST HERMAPHRODITE I'VE EVER SEEN! / THIS FEMALE HAS CANCER.

- That red "button" at the vulva is clitoral hypertrophy from testosterone given at the track to keep females out of heat

SKIN HEMANGIOSARCOMAS IN GREYHOUNDS ARE HIGHLY MALIGNANT.

- Skin hemangiosarcomas in "glabrous" (ventrally "nude" breeds such as greyhounds and Italian greyhounds) are solar induced and have a lower potential for metastasis.

I DON'T WANT TO AMPUTATE (OR EUTHANIZE) FOR BONE CANCER. I'LL JUST MAKE HIM COMFORTABLE FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE (OR . . . AMPUTATION IS NOT THE END OF THE WORLD).

- Bone cancer is a constant, throbbing pain - the most intractable pain in veterinary medicine.
- The pain is not well controlled with meds - if it was, veterinarians wouldn't recommend amputation.

- Amputation is done simply to get the dog out of pain, it will not increase survival time.
- Only adding chemo will make him live longer.
- If not amputated, be generous with pain meds and be ready to euthanize.

I DON'T WANT TO GIVE RIMADYL, DERAMAXX, ETC. FOR BONE CANCER - IT MIGHT DAMAGE HIS LIVER.

- Don't become hung up on the possibility of side effects - bone cancer does not have a long term. Give what it takes to keep him from hurting.
- Combine meds (NSAIDs, narcotics, Ultram, Fosamax, etc.)

SHE'S NOT IN PAIN - SHE JUST LIMPS, HAS NEVER CRIED OUT.

- If she does not put the foot down, it hurts!
- Poor appetite, panting, shaking, can't get comfortable, stops participating, and mostly, "that look in her eye" - all are signs of pain.
- Pathologic fractures (the bone breaks at the weak spot) are excruciatingly painful - euthanize before this can happen.

DOGS CAN'T TAKE TYLENOL.

- Tylenol /codeine is one of the most common pain meds given to bone cancer/amputation patients.

That hind end weakness is probably hip dysplasia.

- Hip dysplasia is rare in greyhounds.
- Hind end problems are most likely lumbosacral stenosis in older greyhounds.

WE SENT THE X-RAYS TO A RADIOLOGIST AND HE CAN'T FIND A REASON WHY SHE'S LIMPING EITHER.

- Many things that cause limping aren't seen on x-rays (soft tissue, neuro, corns).
- A good orthopedic exam is key - an orthopedic surgeon is a good bet for finding obscure lamenesses.