

Health Statement for Adoption Agreement

Adoption Agreement Clause 3:

I acknowledge I have been made aware that retired racing greyhounds have a relatively high prevalence of certain diseases and conditions as outlined on the GAP website - <https://www.greyhoundsaspets.org.nz/info-resources/health-matters>. I understand that some of these conditions may be related to the way the greyhound was reared, kept, and used prior to being made available for adoption as a pet, and I agree to accept all responsibility for the cost of any future veterinary or other treatment that the greyhound may need.

Web Health Statement:

Greyhounds bred and reared for racing are predominantly selected for their suitability for the sport, and physical robustness is a key part of this. Greyhounds do not tend to suffer from common genetic conditions usually associated with other large purebred dogs (such as hip or elbow dysplasia¹) and are relatively long lived with an average life expectancy of around 12 years². However greyhounds, like all purebred dogs, can suffer from some heritable disorders, as well as conditions that could be associated with the way in which greyhounds are reared, kept and used prior to being made available for adoption^{1,2,3}. The following information highlights some of the most prevalent conditions associated with ex-racing greyhounds.

The most prevalent condition to be aware of is periodontal disease, occurring in 39% of the greyhound population, compared with just over 9% in all other breeds². Dental disease can significantly compromise welfare, affecting the greyhound's ability to eat and behave normally, as well as causing pain and discomfort and being associated with other serious systemic conditions. The second most prevalent group of disorders are musculoskeletal disorders (including osteoarthritis), occurring in 14% of the greyhound population, compared with an average of 12% in all other breeds². Osteoarthritis is a degenerative disease, and effective clinical management is necessary to alleviate associated pain. Greyhounds are also prone to nail and claw issues, and if nails are overgrown greyhounds are more prone to injury². Awareness of these issues, by all who care for greyhounds, is essential to ensure preventive and remedial strategies are prioritised to maintain the welfare of greyhounds.

Greyhounds also have a relatively high incidence of corns (6% of the population²) which are a common cause of lameness, and they can suffer from a higher than average prevalence of eye conditions including retinopathy and pannus. These conditions are treatable, and early detection and treatment can improve wellbeing and, in the case of eye conditions, protect vision.

The most common cause of death in greyhounds is cancer (22% of deaths, compared with an average of 17% in all other breeds²) and the most common cancer is osteosarcoma (45% of all greyhound cancer diagnoses²). Studies have shown that greyhounds are more likely than most other breeds to be diagnosed with osteosarcoma^{1,2,3}. Osteosarcoma occurs in 6% of the greyhound population². The next most prevalent cause of death is arthritis, which accounts for 8% of deaths in greyhounds².

Veterinary Care

Greyhounds possess unique physiological and morphological (physical) features, mostly associated with artificial selection for speed, and clinicians and clinical pathologists need to be aware of differences in hematologic and specific serum biochemical values in greyhounds, compared with those in the general canine population, to avoid misinterpretations and misdiagnoses⁴. For example, greyhounds have lower concentrations of the thyroid hormone T4, which can lead to a misdiagnosis of hypothyroidism⁴. Greyhounds also have larger muscle mass and significantly higher arterial blood pressure than non-greyhounds, a higher red blood cell count, lower white blood cell, neutrophil, and platelet counts, as well as other differences. Due to some of these differences in their physiology, greyhounds make great blood donors, but are also prone to post-operative bleeding, and require special care if they suffer traumatic wounds due to risk associated with continued bleeding; they may also require extra precautions when under anaesthetic⁴.

References

- 1 Lord, L. K., Yaissle, J. E., Marin, L., & Couto, C. G. (2007). Results of a web-based health survey of retired racing greyhounds. *Journal of Veterinary Internal Medicine*, 21(6), 1243-1250. doi: 10.1892/07-063.1

- 2 O'Neill, D.G., Rooney, N.J., Brock, C., Church, D.B., Brodbelt, D.C. and Pegram, C. (2019) 'Greyhounds under general veterinary care in the UK during 2016: demography and common disorders', *Canine Genetics and Epidemiology*, available: [dx.doi.org/10.1186/s40575-019-0072-5](https://doi.org/10.1186/s40575-019-0072-5)
- 3 Tuohy, Joanne L., Shaevitz, Marejka H., Garrett, Laura D., Ruple, Audrey, & Selmic, Laura E. (2020). Demographic characteristics, site and phylogenetic distribution of dogs with appendicular osteosarcoma: 744 dogs (2000-2015). *PLoS ONE*, 14(12), e0223243. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0223243
- 4 Zaldívar-López, S., Marín, L. M., Iazbik, M. C., Westendorf-Stingle, N., Hensley, S., & Couto, C. G. (2011). Clinical pathology of Greyhounds and other sighthounds. *Veterinary Clinical Pathology*, 40(4), 414-425. doi: 10.1111/j.1939-165X.2011.00360.x