

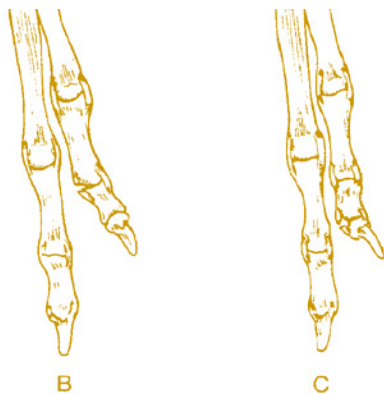
Vet's Corner

Well it is now 9 months since we saw our first Greyhound 'Charlie' as part of the GAP re-homing scheme. I thought it might be appropriate to comment on what happens to these dogs before they are re-homed.

All the dogs are temperament tested by the staff at Creature Comforts kennels, and only those that pass these tests are presented to our Vet clinic for check-ups and neutering.

All dogs are given a check on arrival at our clinic for any abnormality which may create ongoing problems. Because these have been performance animals, they will often have suffered some form of musculoskeletal injury during their racing careers.

An example of this is called Blown Toe. This is more accurately described as luxation or subluxation of the phalanges (toes). These can occur at any toe joint but the distal (lowest joint) inter-phalangeal joint is most commonly involved. This injury is almost exclusively confined to racing greyhounds and working dogs. In greyhounds, the toe is usually luxated to the left side, that is the side that is the inside of the track. This injury is quite common and reflects the major stress that is exerted on toes and in fact many other joints in high performance athletes which result in ligament rupture (torn).



B) Lateral subluxation of the proximal interphalangeal joint with rupture of the medial collateral ligaments.

C) Lateral subluxation of the distal interphalangeal joint with rupture of the medial collateral ligaments.

Some of these injuries may have been treated by surgery and others left to stabilise. The result will often be a swollen and thickened toe. This is due to scar tissue formation. Generally, these are no longer painful and are unlikely to trouble your dog as a pet.

Other parts of the examination include the cardiovascular system, respiration, skin/coat and temperature. We also check their mouths. A significant number of these dogs have evidence of dental disease which includes tartar (build up

of plaque) and periodontal disease. Excessive plaque build-up leads to periodontal disease which is irreversible but controllable with good dental attention and appropriate food. Greyhound food while in training and racing is probably the main cause of this problem. Dental exercise in forms of rigorous chewing is an important part of dental health for any carnivore.

Dogs with very severe dental problems may fail the GAP program. Other dogs with varying degrees of problems may have some dental work carried out, tartar removal and polishing of teeth. I would advise owners to ensure your vet looks at your new pet's teeth and carry out any necessary remedial work at future visits. Ensuring your dog has things to chew on ie, bones/rawhide chews, will help.

On passing their physical examination, the dogs are given a pre-medication and a general anaesthetic for their surgery /neutering. All dogs at this clinic that have lengthy surgeries are then given intravenous fluids. These fluids help maintain the animals blood pressure during the anaesthetic and surgery as well as assisting in the recovery period. Greyhounds have special anaesthetic requirements, mainly due to their lack of body fat (fat absorbs anaesthetic).

All dogs are vaccinated with the basic distemper/hepatitis/parvovirus/adenovirus and parainfluenza, and are micro-chipped. They are then provided with the relevant certification for presentation on registration at their local council.

The significant feature that we have learnt here at SRVS is the wonderful pets that these dogs make. Admittedly we probably see the favourites from the racing kennels, and they have been temperament tested before we see them, but they are certainly a great breed and we are pleased to be able to assist some of them into being re-homed.

Dave Angove BAVsc
Southern Rangitikei Veterinary Services
Bulls



"Many people who are allergic to dogs are not allergic to greyhounds due to their short, sleek coat and skin type"

Yahoo Group

GAP CHAT

If you're not already a member then come and join us at www.groups.yahoo.com/group/nzgreyhoundsaspets, the online forum for discussing all things greyhound. We now have 63 members, most of whom have an ex-racer as a pet, and regularly get online to share stories and photos, as well as advice and organise get-togethers. Anyone with an interest in ex-racing greyhounds will enjoy this site – we look forward to seeing you there!