

# Vet's Corner

## Tail Injuries/Bleeding Tail

Has your Greyhound got a happy tail? Is it happy to see you and whacks against all in sundry?

Sores at the tip of the tail happen to the Greyhound with greater frequency than any other breed. Sometimes a bleeding tail is caused by one of the various skin diseases; mostly though a bleeding tail is the result of injury. The tip bleeds profusely and, for some reason, the dog takes great delight in wagging his tail at every opportunity and splattering blood everywhere through constantly banging the sore parts on hard surfaces, especially in the kennel. The surrounding area soon takes on the appearance of a miniature slaughterhouse.

The Greyhound has very thin skin, no fat, and often limited hair covering on the tail. This makes the skin more likely to split with trauma and constant banging. Unfortunately while the condition may not be serious it can be very difficult to treat or cure. Treatment revolves around treatment of existing trauma and prevention of recurrence (often very difficult).

Treatment of the injury requires treating wounds with antiseptic, stopping bleeding, and dressing. We normally use dressings to control bleeding after treating with antiseptic cream or ointment but a technique described in literature is: swabbing with hydrogen peroxide which will often stop the initial bleeding. When the bleeding has stopped, dip the tail into friars balsam (in an egg cup). When it dries a gummy covering will have formed over the sore. The tail must be held securely during treatment or the dog will bang the tail and bleeding will start again.

Now the tail needs to be dressed. Use a non-stick dressing, then cotton wool (pad well), then cover with vetrap (cohesive) bandage. This needs to go up the tail so that it will not slip off the tapering end. Elastoplast that extends from the top end of the bandage onto the hair of tail above will help hold it in place.

Protecting the tail with padding will help in preventing further trauma. Hopefully the GAP greyhounds living in more spacious environments will have less hard surfaces close by to cause injury. Unfortunately prevention and treatment may be insufficient and in some cases small or significant parts of the tail may need to be amputated, and even then some dogs will still injure their tails. Often it requires some inventive ways to restrict tail movement while it is healing. One method described has an adhesive bandage placed about the thigh of one hind leg and the bandaged tail included in the bandage keeping it still and to the side so the dog can still go to the toilet.

These are some thoughts that may help you deal with what can be described as a 'bloody nuisance' of a problem.

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