

Vaccinating your greyhound

Industry Practice Guide 4.1



Greyhound Welfare Code of Practice

Relevant Standards

3.11 Unless directed otherwise by a veterinarian, puppies must not be vaccinated before four weeks of age.

3.12 Participants must ensure that all greyhounds in their care are vaccinated from the age of 6-8 weeks, and that vaccinations are kept up to date. **R**

3.13 Unless a veterinarian has provided contrary advice in writing, greyhounds must be vaccinated against:

- Distemper virus **R**
- Parvovirus **R**
- Canine Adenovirus **R**
- Parainfluenza virus **R**
- Bordetella bronchiseptica. **R**

With many greyhounds housed together in kennels and racing, regular vaccinations are essential. Vaccination will protect your greyhounds, and the greyhound population as a whole, against infectious disease.

Under the Rules of Racing, puppies must be vaccinated in order to be registered, and full vaccination is required in order to name a greyhound.

This guide explains the purpose of these vaccinations, and the requirements that participants must meet.

Types of vaccinations

The two most common vaccinations are known as “C3” and “C5”.

The “C” stands for “Canine”. A standard C3 vaccination is administered through injections and provides protection against the following three infectious diseases:

- Distemper virus
- Parvovirus
- Canine Adenovirus

You may also hear references to the “C4” vaccination, which includes the C3 vaccinations plus vaccination for parainfluenza virus (or “PI”). Parainfluenza virus is one of the most common causes of kennel cough in dogs.

A C5 vaccination includes protection against the following:

- Distemper virus
- Parvovirus
- Canine Adenovirus
- Parainfluenza virus (PI)
- Bordetella bronchiseptica (BB)

Bordetella bronchiseptica (or “BB”) is the other key component of kennel cough.

The kennel cough components of the vaccination (PI and BB) can be administered as an injection, or an intra-nasal solution or oral solution (BB only).

All greyhounds must be vaccinated to a C5 level by 16 weeks of age. Proof of C5 vaccination is required to register your puppy with GWIC.

For further details regarding puppy vaccinations, please refer to the GWIC Puppy Vaccination Factsheet.

What is kennel cough?

Kennel cough (“KC”) or Canine Infectious Respiratory Disease Complex (CIRDC) is a highly infectious disease that affects a dog’s respiratory system. It can spread easily wherever there are numbers of dogs together, which is why it is such a concern for the greyhound racing industry.

Kennel cough is not caused by one single ‘bug’. Rather, it is a complex which is most likely to emerge as a result of several different diseases. Parainfluenza virus and Bordetella bronchiseptica are the most common components of kennel cough, which is why these are included in the C5 vaccination.

Symptoms of kennel cough include a hacking ‘goose-honking’ cough, either with or without mucus, and a runny nose and eyes. The greyhound may behave normally, or may develop a fever, become lethargic and go off its food.

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Kennel cough is highly infectious, so it is crucial to isolate any greyhound suspected of having it and seek veterinary treatment. Left untreated, kennel cough can cause permanent lung damage.

When to vaccinate

Bitches must be vaccinated to a C5 level before breeding to ensure antibodies are transferred to their puppies.

Puppies are born with a level of immunity to disease that they inherit from their mother, which is why they are not vaccinated at birth. Vaccinating a puppy too early will have no effect.

Vaccinations should commence at about 6 - 8 weeks of age (the Code of Practice prohibits vaccinating puppies before the age of 4 weeks, unless authorised by a veterinarian). A proposed schedule of vaccinations is set out on the next page.

Greyhounds must be vaccinated to C5 level in order to be named for racing. The Code of Practice now requires that all greyhounds have C5 vaccination, and this vaccination must be kept up to date throughout the greyhound's life (usually by an annual booster).

Other vaccinations:

In addition to the standard C5, trainers may wish to consider upgrading to the "C7" vaccination. A C7 vaccination also includes protection against:

- Canine Coronavirus (or canine infectious diarrhoea), and
- Leptospirosis

It provides your greyhound with extra protection against infectious diseases that are endemic in the dog population in Australia (both racing and companion animals).

Recently, some states have seen outbreaks of Canine Coronavirus (this is not related to human coronavirus/COVID-19). Infected dogs may display symptoms such as inappetence, vomiting and diarrhoea. Vaccination may aid in reducing the spread of this disease and may reduce the severity of the symptoms too.

There are fact sheets about Leptospirosis and Canine Coronavirus available on the Commission's website: www.gwic.nsw.gov.au

You can also talk to your veterinarian for more information.

MINIMUM VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS

Options	6 - 8 weeks	10 -16 weeks	
1 (preferred)	C3	C3 + kennel cough intra-nasal (BB + PI)	
2 (preferred)	C3	C4 + kennel cough oral (BB only)	
3	C3 + injectable kennel cough (BB + PI)	C3 + injectable kennel cough (BB + PI)	
4	C3	10 - 12 weeks	14 - 16 weeks
		C3 + Injectable kennel cough (BB + PI)	C3 + Injectable kennel cough (BB + PI)