

Greyhound nutrition and diet

Industry Practice Guide 1.0



Greyhound Welfare Code of Practice

Relevant Standards:

2.1 All greyhounds must be fed at least once daily. Food must be provided in sufficient quantity and nutritional quality. Food must be canine-appropriate and meet the daily requirements for the greyhound's age, size, condition, and level of activity. **R**

2.2 Unless directed otherwise by a veterinarian, greyhounds must be provided with raw meaty bones and/or chew toys to promote dental health. **R**

2.3 Food must not be allowed to become rancid, decayed or insect infested. Uneaten food must be disposed of before a fresh meal is provided. **R**

2.4 Food fed to greyhounds must not contain raw offal. **R**

2.5 Participants must ensure they have adequate food available on site to meet the needs of the greyhounds in the event of an emergency such as illness or accident. **R**

A good, well-balanced diet is essential for greyhound health and performance. Inadequate diet can lead to poor bone growth and reduce a greyhound's ability to heal after injury.

A balanced diet requires a mix of protein, carbohydrates, fat and fibre, adequate to maintain body condition. The body condition index over the page provides more information about optimal body condition for a racing greyhound.

The precise amounts and proportions of food to provide to each greyhound to achieve this will differ. Greyhounds' dietary needs vary according to a range of factors such as:

- Climate – In cold or hot weather a greyhound will need extra energy to maintain their body temperature
- Exercise – A greyhound that is exercising intensively will need extra food
- Pregnancy or lactation – Pregnancy and lactation place big demands on the dam's body and she will need extra food. At the time of peak lactation, for example, a dam typically requires three times her normal energy intake.

- Body weight – A greyhound's size and weight will impact on the amount of food required.

What to feed your greyhound

Getting the right mix of foods in your greyhound's diet is a science, and many greyhound trainers guard their trade secrets closely! But here are some things to bear in mind:

- Greyhounds need protein for bone growth and muscle repair. They love meat, but more protein is not always better. Not only is meat more expensive, but balancing meat with carbohydrates will result in the protein content of meat being available for muscle repair, rather than being "wasted" in producing energy. Too much protein in a greyhound's diet may also cause diarrhoea
- Carbohydrates. Many trainers include rice, pasta or bread in their greyhound's diet. Carbohydrates provide a greyhound with the energy it needs to run.
- Fruit and vegetables. Many trainers add fruit or vegetables to their greyhound's diet. These are good for adding fibre to the diet, which assists digestion.
- Fats. Fat is essential in greyhound diets to provide energy and assist with the absorption of vitamins from their food. Fat is often present in meat, and many trainers also add fish (beware of Arsenic in fish products) or vegetable oils to their greyhound's diet. Extra fat in the diet is necessary in cold weather.
- Mineral content – especially calcium - is necessary for bone strength. Inadequate mineral content, particularly when a puppy is growing, can impact bone strength and expose the greyhound to injuries.
- Dog biscuits or kibble. Kibble is a convenient food for dogs, and most trainers now use kibble to form some part of their greyhound's diet. Quality dog biscuits are formulated to provide for your greyhound's nutritional needs but whatever brand you choose, it is important to check what is in it.
- Bones. Greyhounds are vulnerable to dental disease, which can be painful and costly to treat. Consequently, it is important to include raw, meaty bones or chews as part of your greyhound's diet.

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Supplements

A greyhound that is being kept as a pet and receiving a good, well-balanced diet should not need supplements. However, training, racing and pregnancy can result in increased nutrient demands leading to deficiencies in nutrients, vitamins or electrolytes.

Many trainers include supplements such as calcium in their greyhound's diet. When using supplements, it is important to remember that more is not always better. Giving the wrong supplements, or supplements in incorrect amounts can have negative health effects for your greyhound.

Human supplements and vitamins may contain toxic or prohibited substances, so it is best to use supplements registered for use in dogs and speak to your veterinarian before use.

When providing supplements, trainers also need to be mindful of the Rules of Racing. Some commercially produced supplements contain prohibited substances such as arsenic or cobalt (vitamin B12) that can result in a positive swab, even in very small doses.

As with any food, be sure to check exactly what is in the supplement before you give it to your greyhound. 'Natural' or herbal products may still contain prohibited substances and are best avoided close to racing.

If in doubt, ask your vet for advice. Vets can also do a blood test to identify vitamin or mineral deficiencies.

Things to avoid

There are certain foods that are harmful and even toxic for dogs, including:

- Cooked bones of any kind
- Raw potatoes
- Onions or garlic
- Avocado
- Alcohol or coffee
- Grapes or raisins
- Peaches or plums
- Nuts (Macadamia nuts, Almonds, Walnuts, Pecans)
- Chocolate
- Processed lollies, sweets or chewing gum.



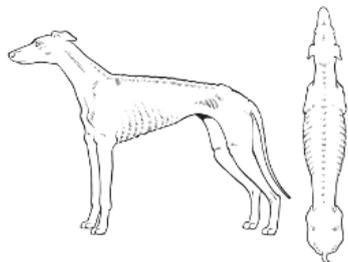
NSW Government acknowledges the work of Greyhound Racing Victoria, which informed development of this Guide.

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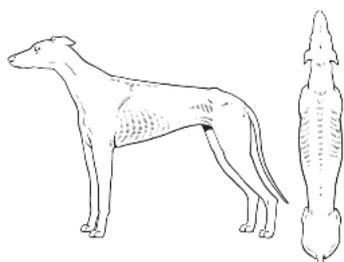
Emaciated



- Individual ribs, spine and pelvis prominent and evident from a distance.
- Lack of muscle mass.
- Little or no body fat.
- Rump hollow.
- Waist prominent when viewed from above.
- Abdomen obviously tucked up.
- Neck thin.
- No fat on tail.

Seek veterinary advice.

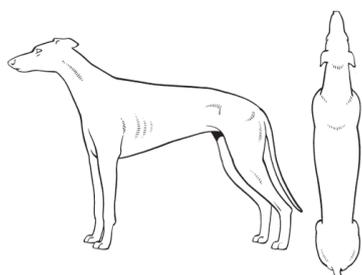
Thin



- Ribs, spine and pelvis bones visible and easily felt.
- Little body fat.
- Neck thin.
- Abdomen tucked up.
- Little fat on tail.
- Obvious waist when viewed from above.

Increase feeding and administer worm treatment. Seek veterinary advice if greyhound remains underweight or if you are unsure of the correct feeding or worming regime.

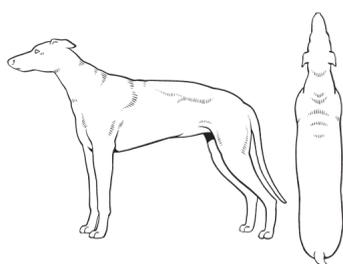
Ideal



- Ribs and spine can be felt, last few ribs may be visible.
- Dog should have a waist when viewed from above.
- Belly is tucked up when viewed from side.
- Good muscle mass.
- Rump well-muscled.

(Note: Racing greyhounds are usually between 'thin' and 'ideal'.)

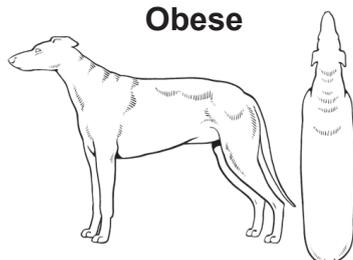
Overweight



- Ribs and spine not visible but can be felt.
- Fat deposit on tail.
- Little or no waist when viewed from above, rounded appearance, back appears broadened.
- Greyhound squarish along back line when viewed from side.
- Abdomen not tucked up, may appear rounded underneath.
- Reduce feed intake and increase exercise.

Seek veterinary advice if you are unsure of appropriate diet or have concerns over exercise regime.

Obese



- Ribs and spine not visible and difficult to feel.
- Tail has obvious fat deposit.
- No waist and back broadened when viewed from above.
- Belly obviously rounded and possibly distended.
- Greyhound square or rounded up along back line when viewed from side.

Seek veterinary advice on diet and exercise regime.