

***READY***



***SET***

***GO***

## **A Greyhound Adoption Guide**

***Northern Sky Greyhound Adoption Association  
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## Getting READY to Adopt

Welcome to the world of greyhounds -one of the most ancient and prestigious breed of dogs. Valued for their extraordinary hunting ability, greyhounds have a long history and are the only dog mentioned specifically in the bible. Worshipped in ancient Egypt and revered by royalty in medieval times, your greyhound was a cherished and treasured companion.

Modern day greyhounds are sensitive, and surprisingly gentle. They tend to be calm, and can exhibit a quiet but surprising independence. Retired racing greyhounds are intelligent dogs that learn quickly and are anxious to please. During their race training, greyhounds are handled a great deal and as a result, love people and tend to be quite sociable.

They love to walk and most will have excellent leash manners. The retired racer has not been taught how to sit, climb stairs, or play games. However, with time they can learn all of these things.

Whether a racer for a month or for several years, racing greyhounds are accustomed to a regimented lifestyle. The schedule for feeding, turn-outs (bathroom breaks) and rest is strict in a racing kennel and consequently the transition from professional racer to pet can be very confusing. Patience and encouragement on your part will do wonders in easing your new greyhound into this new environment.

To ease the transition from athlete to treasured companion, all greyhounds adopted through Northern Sky Greyhound Adoption Association will have been introduced to home living in foster care. This guide has been developed to help you prepare for the day your greyhound comes home so you can seamlessly continue that transition and acquaint your greyhound to their new role in life -- being your best friend and companion.

### Recommended Reading

Take some time to learn about ex-racers and find out what to expect before you adopt and bring your greyhound home. These are excellent reference books and will help you be prepared to handle almost any situation that arises.

[Adopting the Racing Greyhound \(3rd edition\)](#) - by Cynthia A. Branigan

[Retired Racing Greyhounds for Dummies](#) - by Lee Livingood

If you have children in the home, we also recommend

[Childproofing Your Dog: A Complete Guide to Preparing Your Dog for the Children in Your Life](#) -  
By Brian Kilcommons and Sarah Wilson



## Supplies You Will Need

As part of your adoption fee, you will receive a one piece martingale collar and leash, a lightweight muzzle and a Northern Sky Adoption Association identification tag. Listed below are a number of other items that you will want to have prior to adoption day.

- Dog Bed – As a greyhound has minimal body fat, they require a soft, padded surface to sleep on. You can use thick folded blankets or purchase a cushioned dog bed. When selecting a bed to buy, ensure that it is large enough. Round beds should be at least 36” in diameter, and rectangular beds should be no smaller than 32” by 48”.
- Wire or Plastic Crate – Borrow or buy a large dog crate (40" L x 27" W x 30" H). Crating is a powerful training tool in the transition from racing dog to trusted companion. During the initial adjustment period, your greyhound should be crated whenever you are not there to supervise. Many greyhounds see the crate as their “den” and will continue to use the crate even after they are fully adjusted to home life. If you have never crated a dog before, talk to your adoption representative about how to successfully use the crate as a training tool. Your adoption representative can also arrange a crate rental from Northern Sky Greyhound Adoption Association.
- Baby or Dog Gates - Baby or dog gates are an inexpensive, useful way to control the access your greyhound has to areas of your home during the house breaking period or while you are away.
- Bowls – Buy one bowl for food and one for water. With their height, a greyhound may prefer to eat from a raised dish, especially as they age. You may choose to buy a raised feeder, or place the food and water bowls on an over turned bucket, a bench, or storage tub.
- Dog Food – The food you choose to feed your greyhound should be a good chicken-based food purchased from a pet store and not your grocery store. Buy high quality, premium dry dog kibble that lists meat as the first or second ingredient and avoid foods that contain corn.
- Toys – Buy some soft dog toys. Dogs tend not to chew on things they shouldn’t if they have toys available. Most greyhounds enjoy tossing around (and sometimes ripping apart) squeaky stuffed toys. However, make sure that your greyhound is supervised while playing with toys, as they can tear them apart and swallow the squeaky or other small pieces of the toy.
- Bones – Discuss with your adoption representative what type of bones are suitable for your greyhound to chew. Like all dogs, greyhounds have a natural desire to chew and a raw bone will help in removing tartar from the teeth.
- Dog Coat/Boots – A greyhound's lack of significant body fat causes them to chill very easily. A winter coat and boots are necessary in order for them to be warm and comfortable in cold weather while outside. Boots are especially important if you are walking in areas that are salted in winter. Most dog coats and boots available at pet stores will not fit a greyhound properly. Check our website for links to vendors that make greyhound specific gear.
- Enzyme Cleaning Solution – Accidents will happen. Products like Nature’s Miracle are specifically made for cleaning up those “accident” spots and eliminating odors.



- Identification Tag – Once you receive your dog, buy a pet ID tag that is engraved with your dog's name, your name, address and phone number. Your greyhound will also have a Northern Sky Greyhound Adoption Association tag. Your greyhound should **always** wear a tag collar with these two tags attached to help get your greyhound home quickly and safely if lost.

## Preparing Your House

Greyhounds need order and are routine oriented so take some time to establish the house rules with all family members. Decide before your greyhound arrives whether or not you will allow them to be on the furniture and reinforce the rules from the beginning. We do suggest that you not allow your dog on the furniture during the adjustment period.

Greyhounds and open doorways do not mix. Few greyhounds can resist the temptation of exploring the world beyond when they see an opening. Set the ground rules for opening doors and make sure that all family members are on board. Prior to opening any door, someone should either hold the dog by the collar or confirm that your greyhound is confined in the crate. If you have small children, PLEASE set ground rules immediately that only adults may open doors. Apply this same logic to yard gates, etc. If you have a yard gate, please consider placing some kind of lock on the gate so that it isn't inadvertently left open. It is very important that doors not leading to fenced areas never be left standing open.

Walk around your house and look for hidden hazards. Move any houseplant, knickknacks, books, newspapers and magazines out of reach of your greyhound. For easy visibility mark an X on large windows and sliding glass doors with painters' tape. Clear your kitchen counters of any tempting food items. Ensure that you garbage and recycle containers have secure lids. Double check fencing for holes, loose boards or nails, and put locks on your gates.

Decide on where your greyhound will sleep at night. Remember that your greyhound in its entire life has never slept alone. For this reason, and to aid in housebreaking, we suggest that you place a dog bed next to your bed. Use a baby gate to prevent your greyhound from leaving your bedroom, or just close the bedroom door to prevent any unsupervised roaming.

## Planning the Initial Introductions

Plan your adoption day for a time when you can spend a few days settling your new family member in. Plan how you will introduce your greyhound to the rest of the new pack – whether animal or human. Your greyhound does need to be properly introduced to every member of his new pack. However, do not put off introductions to other people and their pets until after your greyhound has had a chance to settle in to the new surroundings.

The muzzle should be used for all initial introductions to other animals and small children in your home. Used correctly, the muzzle is not cruel, and greyhounds have been wearing muzzles since they were puppies.



## *Greyhounds and Other Dogs*

Proper introductions and the first few days are critical. Introduce the dogs on neutral ground – a few blocks away from your house. Have both dogs on leash for the meeting. Accept no signs of aggression. Any sign of growling or aggression should be met with a quick tug of the leash and a sharp 'NO! After this initial meeting, walk the dogs together back to your home and around your property before bringing them into the house.

Be careful and watchful the first few days while the pecking order is being established. Let them work out who will be the leader and who will be follower between themselves. Although greyhounds are used to sharing attention, your other dog may not initially be comfortable and may need a little extra attention. Neither dog should be allowed to behave badly. Supervise them at feeding time until you're sure each dog knows which dish is theirs. Do not let them out in the yard alone together until they are comfortable with one another.

If your other pet is a very small breed, some special rules need to be applied. Greyhounds who have never seen a small dog may initially think the little dog is something that should be chased and caught. Your greyhound simply does not know better. With strong verbal reprimands from you (and a few from the little guy as well) your greyhound will quickly learn who is boss.

## *Greyhounds and Cats*

It's important that your greyhound understands from the start that the cat(s) is also a member of your family and that chasing or harassing is not acceptable. Bring your greyhound, leashed and muzzled into the same room as the cat. Maintain a firm hold on your greyhound's leash. Do not pick up the cat and do not force them towards each other.

If your greyhound tries to dart towards the cat, correct this behavior with a stern "NO" and a firm tug of his leash. Watch your greyhound for the following signs of possible aggression:

- Teeth clicking or snapping
- Ears alert – although by itself this merely could indicate curiosity
- Fixed gaze or stare – which cannot be broken even when you run your hand in front of your greyhound's eyes
- Trembling and/or lurching

If your greyhound shows none of the above signs and/or ignores the cat completely once corrected, take the leash off but keep the muzzle on until you are completely comfortable with their interactions.

A few points to keep in mind:

- Supervise or separate – your greyhound should be crated or muzzled when no one is home for the initial transition period.
- The cat should always have a way to escape. You can move furniture slightly away from the wall or have a baby gate slightly raised off the floor.



- Never allow your greyhound to chase the cat even in play. In the blink of an eye, the chase can change from play to hunt.
- Cat food has an irresistible smell and should be placed in a high spot so that your greyhound cannot get to it.
- The litter box should be placed up high or in a room which is blocked by a baby gate about 12 inches off the floor (so the cat can go under but not your greyhound).

Acceptance of your indoor cat may NOT apply to cats that are outdoors. Be cautious and check your yard for your own or neighbourhood cats before letting your greyhound outdoors. Greyhounds are sighthounds; outside their instincts may take over and they will give chase to the cat.

The same basic rules of cat training should also be applied when introducing your greyhound to other animals in your home. Your adoption representative is available to answer any additional questions on introductions or to assist you “cat training” if needed.

### *Greyhounds and Children*

Your greyhound is one of the most easy-going breeds, but it is nonetheless just a dog with instincts and needs. Your greyhound is not a toy. As a member of your family, it deserves respect, personal space, and responsible care.

Initial introductions to children should be done with your greyhound leashed. Let your greyhound take the initiative and sniff the child before any gentle petting is done. It is important to reinforce to your greyhound that children are part of the ‘human coaching team’ not littermates. Even though a child may be at eye level, your dog must understand that the child is still a person and must respond accordingly. For this reason, we strongly recommend that your greyhound does not share your child’s bed.

Teach your children and any others that will come into contact with your new family member how to properly behave around the dog. Never allow them to mistreat or harass the dog at any time, especially while he is sleeping, eating or chewing.

Let sleeping dogs lie. A greyhound needs a place of their own to rest undisturbed. Whether this is a dog bed or a crate, this “safe” space is off limits to children. A sleeping dog should never be pounced on or otherwise disturbed. Greyhounds often sleep with their eyes open so make sure the dog is actually awake before approaching. Call the dog’s name and watch for a response that indicates that your greyhound is fully awake.

Children often express their affection by hugging or clinging to the dog. Teach your children that this can be ‘scary’ for the dog and encourage gentle stroking of the neck and shoulders instead.

Initially and until both child and dog are fully trained, outdoor play with your greyhound should be closely supervised. Instead of running and jumping, have your child join you as you stand in place and encourage your dog to come to you. This provides exercise and a reminder that all people are in control, whether large or small. Do not let young or inexperienced children play with your Greyhound (or any dog) unsupervised.



The main rule to keep in mind concerning children and dogs is easy – **SAFETY FIRST**. This applies to both the dog and the kids. Do not leave young children and dogs alone together. If you cannot supervise, separate your dog from the child.





## SETtling In – The Adjustment Period

Becoming a house pet involves a dramatic change for your greyhound. The information contained in this guide will help you help your greyhound to quickly adapt to their new role as a treasured family companion.

### Greyhounds Like Routine

Throughout your greyhound's life, someone has set the boundaries – starting with his/her mother, then trainers, and now you. Retired racers believe that people are all-knowing and all-powerful, making you the natural choice to set the ground rules. Your greyhound is counting on you for leadership to learn what is good and what isn't, what is allowed and what isn't. The messages you send will shape your dog's idea of the world.

Your greyhound will respond to your reaction, not your words. If you coddle or fuss when your greyhound shies away from something new, the dog will learn to react timidly to new situations. Instead encourage your greyhound in an upbeat tone of voice while gently stroking the dog's neck reassuringly.

Decide ahead of time what is acceptable and not acceptable behaviour for your greyhound and make sure all family members consistently abide by the rules. All family members also need to be in agreement with a consistent method of reprimanding your greyhound.

Never, ever hit a greyhound. The most effective way of reprimanding your greyhound is with a firm, sharp "NO". Alternatively, try a squirt bottle filled with water. A couple of squirts of water will make your greyhound think twice before attempting the undesired behaviour again.

Greyhounds thrive on routine. Feed at set times, walk at set times and let your greyhound out to do his business at set times. Initially, do not vary your schedule, even on the weekends. The sooner you establish a routine, the sooner your greyhound will start to thrive.

### Settling Into Home Life

When you first arrive home, give your greyhound a chance to relieve itself and release some energy before entering the house. Walk back and forth in a small area until the dog does their business.

Carefully supervise your greyhound during the initial exploration of its new home. Your home is a completely new environment and experience for your greyhound. While still leashed, walk your greyhound around your home. Offer words of encouragement or discouragement as your greyhound sniffs their way through your home.

The settling in period can last from a matter of days to a matter of months, depending on your greyhound. Sometimes they will be fretful, whine, and look to you for reassurance by following you around from room to room. With patience and reassurance, these behaviours will soon disappear.

Alternatively, many newly adopted dogs go through a "honeymoon period". For the first week or so, it is not unusual for your greyhound to be very quiet and controlled.



After all this is an entirely new experience for them. As your greyhound starts to feel more comfortable and has figured out the house rules, the schedule, and the personalities of your family, your greyhound's personality will emerge.

Don't allow your greyhound to feel overwhelmed, or to get into situations that might be dangerous. Simple things like stairs, glass doors, and shiny floors may be frightening at first. Take some time to reassure your greyhound that these new things are not a big deal and with a little work, can easily be mastered. Some not so obvious household hazards are discussed below.

- *Sliding glass doors and plate glass windows* - Your greyhound looks and sees nothing but the outside. Introduce these obstacles by tapping on the glass to let the dog know it's there. You can also put tape or stickers on the glass at eye level.
- *Blinds and Draperies* – Your greyhound will want to look out the window. If the blinds are down or drapes are drawn, the dog may tear down the drapes or blinds in their effort to see outside.
- *Mirrors* are also a new experience for your dog. It is not unusual for a greyhound to spend hours staring at their reflection in a mirror, or to dart back and forth around the mirror looking for that other greyhound to play with it.
- *Stoves and counter tops* - What temptation! They are at eye level AND amazing smells are coming from there – an irresistible combination for a greyhound. Your greyhound has no prior exposure to the hot surface of a stove or the hot food coming out of the oven and placed on a counter. Rule of thumb – keep your greyhound out of the kitchen when you are cooking or baking.

## Housebreaking

Racing greyhounds are "kennel trained" which means they know to keep their sleeping areas (crates) clean and to relieve themselves outside. With some consistent effort in the first few days, this training can easily be transferred to your greyhound's new adoptive home.

For the first few days make sure your greyhound goes out often. Develop a schedule and stick as closely to it as you can. As a minimum, your greyhound should go out first thing in the morning, before and after each meal, when awakening from naps, before you leave the house for an extended period of time, and before heading to bed for the night.

It is important to differentiate between bathroom walks and exercise walks. The scheduled bathroom walks should be in a restricted area where the dog is taken for the sole reason of going potty. If you want to train the dog to only use a particular area of the yard, now is the time to begin this training. Take the dog to the pre-determined area each and every time for the first week or so, walk back and forth in the area or stand in one spot and let the dog walk around you. Praise profusely or reward with a treat each time the desired action occurs.

Establish not only a set routine of going out but also a word or phrase that identifies this activity such as "Potty?" Or "Do you want out?" Within a few days your greyhound will have adapted



to this new routine and may start giving you signals to be taken outside. Some of the signs that a greyhound needs to go outside are pacing, walking in circles, walking to the door and looking back at you, standing by the door, listlessness and barking.

Male greyhounds in particular may attempt to lift a leg or squat in a few places around the house to "mark" the new territory, especially if you already have a dog. Watch the dog carefully as they walk or sniff around the house and reprimand with a firm 'NO' should you see any leg lifting.

The dog should be crated whenever you are not there to supervise. Be alert and do not let your greyhound out of your sight until you are confident that the dog is housebroken. Accidents do happen and can be thoroughly cleaned with a solution that is 1 part water and 5 parts vinegar or with any of the enzymatic cleaners available for this purpose.

Greyhounds are very clean dogs by nature. If your greyhound continues to have accidents after the first few days, rather than blame the dog, look for the reasons why. Ask yourself the following questions.

1. Is your greyhound confined when not within your sight?
2. Is your greyhound being let out before and after meals?
3. Is your greyhound being given enough time to fully relieve itself?
4. Is your greyhound being fed on schedule?
5. Is your greyhound healthy?
6. Are all member of the household cooperating with the housebreaking effort?
7. Are you praising your greyhound when it eliminates outside?
8. Are you thoroughly cleaning to remove the odor of any accidents?

If after the first few days, your greyhound is continuing to have accidents in the house, and you have answered yes to all the above questions, contact your adoption representative for further advice.

## **Mastering Stairs**

Your greyhound may have experienced stairs in foster care, but the stairs in your home are a new challenge and you will have to train your greyhound to go up and down them safely.

Go slowly, step by step and give lots of praise and encouragement. Never try to force your greyhound up or down the stairs by yanking on the leash. This will only result in your greyhound either "freezing" and refusing to move; or trying to jump the entire flight of stairs in a single bound.



1. Start at the bottom stair and place your greyhound's front paws on the first step.
2. Move one front paw at a time to the next step.
3. At this point your greyhound will likely be leaning back onto your legs. Shift their weight forward by using your leg to "lift" the back paws to the step or place the back two paws on the step.
4. Slowly alternate the front and rear legs up the remaining stairs.
5. When you reach the top of the stairs, reward with praise or a dog cookie.
6. While holding your greyhound's collar, start back down the stairs. You may need to alternately place the front and back paws on the steps just as you did going up.
7. At the bottom of the stairs, again reward your greyhound with praise or a cookie.

Repeat the stair training exercise at least a couple of times a day for the first few days. Greyhounds catch on fast and if properly introduced to going up and down, should be navigating the stairs on their own within a few days. However, if your stairs are the open-backed type or very steep it may take extra time for your greyhound to be comfortable.

Once they do learn to go up and down stairs by themselves, don't be surprised if they speed up and down them at lightning speed!

## **Crate Training**

During its racing career, a greyhound spends a good portion of each day in a crate. The crate is their "den", the spot where they can rest or eat undisturbed. During this adjustment period, where everything else is new to them, the crate is something familiar to your greyhound. Properly used, it is a tool that will help prevent accidents and destructive chewing while providing a "safe" spot for your greyhound.

Properly using a crate will provide your greyhound with a clear sense of where its special place is in the new home. Where you set up the crate is a key factor in successful crate training. Do not set the crate up in a remote location such as the laundry room or basement. Instead choose a location that is part of your daily living space, where your greyhound spends most of the time with the family. This will prevent your greyhound from feeling punished or abandoned. It is also important that the crate you choose be an appropriate size and style for a greyhound. It should be at least 40" long, 27" wide and 30" high. Greyhounds do seem to prefer a wire crate to the solid plastic airline style of crate.

Have the crate set up and ready so that you can familiarize your greyhound with going into the crate. With the door open, lead your greyhound to the crate and encourage him/her to enter with a "kennel up" command. (Your greyhound should be familiar with this command as it is the one most commonly used in training and racing kennels.) You may want to also throw a treat into the crate as an enticement. If the dog hesitates, with one hand on the dog's collar and the other on its back end, gently push your greyhound into the crate. Close the door, praise/reward your greyhound for being good. After a few minutes, let your greyhound out and praise/reward again. Repeat this process two or three times.



The next step is to teach your greyhound that although you may be out of sight you will always come back. Once your greyhound is in the crate, leave the room for 5-10 minutes before returning to let your greyhound out. If your greyhound starts barking, whining or scratching at the crate, stomp back into the room and firmly tell your greyhound to be quiet then stomp back out. Once your greyhound has been quiet for a few minutes, return to the room and enthusiastically praise and reward the dog. Keep repeating the process, each time with extending the time span that you are out of the room.

How long will you need to crate? It will depend on your greyhound. Some will need to use a crate permanently just to keep out of trouble or for a sense of security. Some will transition to being confined with baby gates or x-pens to a particular room without being totally confined. Others, within a short period of time, will have transitioned to full freedom within the house.

It is important to strictly enforce the rule that no one should bother the dog while in the crate. The crate is your greyhound's private den and is off limits to children whether the dog is in the crate or not. No one should disturb any dog when in the crate. Children (and adults) must be taught to never lean into the crate or enter the crate when the dog is in his/her "den". If someone wants to interact with a dog that is in his/her crate, they should call the dog out of the crate to join them.

### **Alone Training**

One of the biggest adjustments your greyhound will have to make is adjusting to being alone. Your greyhound has lived its entire life in the company of other greyhounds with people coming and going throughout the day. Being alone can be frightening and stressful.

Build up to leaving the dog for extended periods. Practice leaving for short periods of time; as discussed in the section on crate training. Done correctly, as you increase the time you spend away, your greyhound will learn to trust that you will return.

Do not make any fuss about leaving, just calmly put on your coat or pick up your car keys. Start by leaving for three to five minutes, returning to the house before the dog starts to whine or become stressed out. When returning, do not make a fuss about your greyhound. Calmly praise and reward the dog, reinforcing the idea that the coming and going is nothing to get concerned about. Gradually increase the time you are away and practice leaving at different times throughout the day or evening. Once you are able to leave your greyhound alone for at least 30 minutes you are well on your way. If a greyhound is going to have Separation Anxiety it will usually happen within the first half hour of being left alone.

Keep the following in mind as you work through Alone Training with your greyhound.

- A tired greyhound is less likely to worry about you leaving. Make sure that your greyhound has had a good walk, with plenty of opportunity to relieve themselves, prior to leaving.
- Leaving your greyhound with something to chew can also relieve the boredom and anxiety. A filled Kong will keep your greyhound busy licking for a couple of hours. If you only give a Kong with a delicious filling when you are leaving, the dog will learn to look forward to your leaving as it means getting this special treat.



- Leave the television or radio on while you are away.
- If you are not crating, ensure that you have dog proofed your home. Keep the windows unobstructed from knick-knacks and blinds so your greyhound can freely go to the windows look for you.
- If your greyhound has an accident, chews up something or demonstrates signs of true Separation Anxiety while alone, do NOT scold as it will only make your dog more anxious. Clean up the mess and restart the training process. Be patient, this can take a few days, a few weeks, or up to a few months depending on the individual dog.

## Separation Anxiety

Separation Anxiety is a term used to describe a dog whose stress when separated from its people leads to extreme behavior problems such as destructive chewing, excessive barking, howling or whining, inappropriate elimination and digging/scratching at doors/walls/windows in an attempt to get to its people.

Separation Anxiety is NOT a common condition and it is not known why it only occurs in some dogs. If you have diligently worked on Alone Training but are still seeing destructive behaviours when you leave, talk to your adoption representative immediately for advice. We have seen cases where the only solution for your greyhound is to be in a home with another dog for company.

## Feeding Your Greyhound

Northern Sky Greyhound Adoption Association recommends feeding your greyhound twice daily (morning and night). As previously discussed, select a premium, chicken based high quality dog kibble that lists meat as the first or second ingredient. It may be necessary to try a few different brands until you find one that works well. Gas, loose stools or other tummy upsets are indications that the food is not agreeing with your greyhound's digestive system. Be aware though that constantly or abruptly changing the brand of food you feed can also cause stomach upset for your greyhound.

Follow the feeding guide on the bag of the food you have chosen and feed the amount recommended based on the weight of your greyhound. This will usually be between 3 -5 cups daily. Usually 3 to 5 cups daily is sufficient. Supplements like vitamins, kelp, brewer's yeast, and/or salmon oil ensure a healthy dog with a nice shiny coat.

Although your greyhound may be overwhelmed the first day or two and may not appear to be interested in eating, it is important to establish a consistent feeding routine. Set the food bowl in the location where you have decided your greyhound will eat and after 20 minutes remove the bowl even if there is uneaten food. By not offering food again until the next scheduled feeding time, it sets the expectation of when and where mealtime occurs.

During the adjustment period your other dogs and your greyhound should be fed away from each other to prevent fights over food. If you are feeding them in the same room, use opposite corners. Monitor the behavior of all the pets, making sure that each one sticks to their own bowl. Initially, your greyhound may seem nervous when eating or be very sloppy, sending more





kibble to the floor then into their mouth. The dog is just worrying that someone else is going to take its food. Once your greyhound settles in and realizes that this is not the case, better manners will prevail.

Keep children away from your greyhound during mealtimes.

The change of diet and excitement of his new home may cause your new pet to have diarrhea. Kaopectate, given at the same dosage as recommended for a small child, can be used. If the diarrhea persists for more than two days, consult your veterinarian.

As your greyhound settles into home life, you may need to adjust the amount you are feeding after the first few weeks based on the dog's activity level and age. A greyhound's skeletal structure cannot support extra pounds and allowing them to gain too much weight can lead to other health problems. You should be able to see the last three ribs and feel the others. As well, there should be an indented area – a tuck – between the ribs and tail. If your dog needs to gain/lose weight, increase/decrease the amount fed by ¼ cup per feeding. You should see results in two to three weeks.

Your greyhound will have to learn another new concept when it comes to food – that there IS a difference between dog food and people food. Confine the dog to the crate while you are eating or train the dog to stay away from the table with a “NO”. Never make the mistake of feeding your greyhound off the table while you are eating. They will soon expect to take your place at the table. Northern Sky Greyhound Adoption Association does not recommend feeding table scraps. This helps to firmly establish in the dog's mind the difference between their food and yours.

Fresh water should always be available. However, an overheated or tired greyhound may have a tendency to drink too much water too quickly. As a result, the dog may take in too much air and immediately throw the water back up. On extremely hot days or following strenuous exercises you may want to offer a few cracked/chipped ice cubes instead.

Greyhounds love treats. At the track these treats may have been apples, bananas, apricots, carrots, pumpkin and/or spinach. Vanilla ice cream and marshmallows were often given as rewards following a good race. If you are buying treats, choose treats with good quality ingredients, avoiding those that contain lots of dye and sugar. Use treats as positive reinforcement of good behaviours, but keep in mind that being too liberal with treats can result in your greyhound losing their appetite for their regular food and weight gain.

Many of the foods that we eat daily are poisonous to dogs. *Chocolate, onions, grapes and raisins* contain ingredients that are toxic to dogs and could cause death.

*A final note on feeding. Strenuous exercise can induce bloat. Strenuous exercise is to be avoided for 1 hour before and 1-2 hours after feeding.*



## Exercise and The Greyt Outdoors

*When outdoors, your greyhound is either on a leash or in a completely fenced and secured area.* A greyhound can NEVER be tied up or put on an overhead running line as it could lead to a serious injury if your greyhound spots something or is startled and takes off running. Retractable leashes are a hazard and should never be used. If you should lose your grip, your greyhound will run in fear from the handle that is dragging behind it.

Your greyhound is an indoor pet only. With no undercoat and minimal body fat to insulate them from heat or cold, retired racing greyhounds are ill equipped for a life outdoors. Although the dog will enjoy spending time outdoors with you, caution needs to be taken during weather extremes. During the heat of summer, plan on exercising your greyhound early in the morning or later in the evening. Keep in mind that it is not only the air temperature you need to consider but also the heat radiating from sidewalks and pavement where you may be walking. In the cold winter months, your greyhound will require a coat and boots, as previously discussed.

If it's cold enough that *you* have to put on a coat to go outside, it's cold enough to put one on your greyhound too. If it is hot enough that *you* have to use the air-conditioner or open the windows of your car, then it is too hot for your greyhound to be outside for a long time.

Outdoor play with children or other pets needs to be closely supervised, especially during the settling in period. Your greyhound is not familiar with traditional play games like fetch. Your greyhound's idea of play may be the game of "imaginary hunter" using a young child or another pet as a lure. Keep everyone safe by muzzling your greyhound and immediately discouraging any chasing behavior with a quick, sharp reprimand.

Instead of "chase" play, stand in one spot and happily encourage your dog to come to you. Have all family members take turns with this "game". As well as providing exercise for the dog, this activity helps introduce your greyhound to being "recalled" and reinforces that people – large or small – are in control.

The retired racing greyhound, like any other breed of dog, requires regular exercise. Two good walks a day will keep your greyhound both physically and mentally fit. Your greyhound will come to you leash trained and will walk quietly beside you. Northern Sky Greyhound Adoption Association will supply you with a 6 foot martingale collar/leash combination to be used when walking the dog. A regular collar attached to a leash cannot be used, as a greyhound can back out of it. Northern Sky Greyhound Adoption Association discourages the use of any of the many retractable leads that are available.

A greyhound can be an enthusiastic jogging partner, however a little time must be taken to build the dog up to your routine. Greyhounds are sprinters and exercise primarily on sand in their kennel situation, which means the pads on their feet are smooth and soft. Start slowly, walking or jogging the dog a few blocks in the beginning. As you notice calluses developing on the dog's pads and as the dog's stamina improves you can gradually increase the length of the jogging session.

Regular walks or jogging will provide sufficient exercise. However, if given a safe opportunity, in a fully fenced and secured area, your greyhound will enjoy a good run. Talk to your adoption





representative about groups that may meet up for regular runs, or watch the website for activities in your area.

*Northern Sky Greyhound Adoption Association cannot stress enough how dangerous it is to allow your greyhound to be unleashed in an unfenced area.* Your greyhound is the product of over four centuries of breeding resulting in exceptional eyesight, and the ability to reach 70 km/hour in four strides. It is deadly to trust that the relatively short time that you have spent working with your dog can overcome these instincts should the dog spot a leaf blowing, a rabbit or even a piece of trash blowing across the road and take chase. This is NOT willful disobedience, this IS instinct. A greyhound who takes off at a full run – either in chase or in startled mode - can find themselves lost within minutes. With limited street smarts a running greyhound is at risk, do not take chances with your dog's life.

If your greyhound does get away it is important that you NOT give chase. Your greyhound will interpret you running after them as a game – getting you to chase them is so much fun! Instead try clapping your hands while calling. If the dog stops and looks at you, bend down and continue encouraging with clapping and calling. If you do not get a response, while still calling the dog's name, turn and walk or slowly run the other way. You may find a squawker helpful in these situations.



# GOing Forward

## Leadership and Obedience Training

Greyhounds, from the time they were born have had boundaries set for them, first by their mothers, then by their trainers. It is the one constant that they could count on and that was familiar – the rules will be set and all they have to do is follow them.

You may be tempted to “spoil” your greyhound for the first few days, wanting to let him/her settle and be comfortable in the new environment and with you, before correcting behaviours and establishing rules. This can lead to bad habits being developed which are going to be harder to correct later on. It is up to you to become a confident and fair leader to your greyhound from the time he/she arrives at your home. One method of establishing yourself as a good leader is by adopting the NILIF (Nothing In Life Is Free) method of training as described at <http://www.k9deb.com/nilif.htm>.

The more you understand your dog from his canine perspective, the easier it will be to modify behaviors and integrate your greyhound into your family "pack". Set the rules from the beginning, and consistently apply them. This will make for an easier transition for your greyhound and for you.

Greyhounds react well to positive reinforcement and are always eager to please. Whether you choose to enroll in a formal obedience class, or decide to teach some commands on your own, remember to always stay positive, remain patient, and be consistent with your command words and/or signals.

If you decide to take a formal obedience class, do your research first. Find an instructor who has worked with greyhounds and knows their temperament/body structure, or one who is willing to learn about the breed and help you modify the training as needed. For example, some greyhounds never learn to sit as it is not a comfortable position for them to be in. Teaching a Greyhound to sit can take some time and a lot of patience and is better left as a command to teach after you have established yourself as his trusted leader and bonded with your new Greyhound.

Forcing the reluctant greyhound to sit when it is physically uncomfortable is not a positive or effective experience for either of you. Never ever use physical force or shout at your greyhound during training sessions. These dogs are highly intelligent and tend to get bored quickly, so keep the training sessions short (about 3-5 minutes) and always end each session on a positive note. Clicker training is a positive, humane and a very successful method when working with greyhounds. More information on this method can be found at: <http://ClickerTraining.com>

## Grooming

The grooming needs of a greyhound are minimal. Although you may choose to use professional groomers for baths, brushing and nail trims, greyhounds are used to being handled and your greyhound's grooming requirements can safely be met at home. Establishing a regular grooming routine will keep your greyhound looking greyt and the grooming sessions will also provide a good bonding experience.



Bathing - As greyhounds have little “doggy odor” they do not require frequent bathing. Use lukewarm water, even in summer. Remember that they have little fat to regulate their body temperature so cold outside tap water, even on a warm summer day can quickly chill your greyhound. Use a good conditioning shampoo, formulated for dogs. After a gentle lathering, it is essential that you rinse, rinse, rinse. Any soapy residue left behind can be very irritating to the greyhound’s skin. To prevent a chill, dry your greyhound thoroughly. The entire bath should take no more than 5-10 minutes. Be aware that your greyhound may become so relaxed while being bathed that he/she may lean on you or even sink to the tub floor. Make sure you have a good firm grip throughout the bathing process.

Brushing – Rubber grooming mitts and/or the oval rubber curry brushes work well with the greyhounds' short coat and thin skin, pulling out the dead fur and reducing shedding. Establishing a routine of regular brushing will keep your greyhound looking greyt. For most of the year, a weekly brushing is all that is needed, however, during the spring and fall shedding season, you may want to brush on a daily basis.

Ears – Your greyhound’s ears should be gently cleaned on a monthly basis. Use a cotton ball, dampened with a mild ear cleaning solution (available at all pet stores) and gently clean inside the flap on your greyhound’s ears. To clean deeper inside the ear, you can squirt a few drops of the solution directly into the ear canal and then gently massage the outside of the ear. NEVER use cotton swabs to attempt a deep, extensive cleaning – this should be left to your veterinarian or a professional groomer.

Nails – The greyhound’s nails are typically longer than those of other breeds, but will still have to be trimmed at least monthly. Ask your veterinarian, dog groomer, or NSGAA representative about the proper way to trim your greyhound’s nails. They can also provide advice on whether to use clippers or a Dremel. Most Greyhounds are used to having their nails trimmed while they stand. Bend each foot backwards, so that you can see the underside of the nail and trim off a little bit at a time. Keep some styptic powder on hand to stop any bleeding if a nail is accidentally “quicked”

Teeth – Your greyhound will have its teeth examined and any necessary cleaning or treatment done, prior to adoption. To maintain your dog’s dental health, you should brush your pet’s teeth weekly. NEVER use human tooth paste to clean your greyhound’s teeth; use dog tooth paste and a dog tooth brush. Start by allowing your greyhound to lick the dog tooth paste off the tooth brush. Be patient and only brush a few strokes the first time. Each session, brush a few more teeth, while giving lots of praise. After just a few sessions like this you should be able to easily brush all the teeth. Gnawing on raw bones knuckle/soup/marrow bones will also help clean the greyhound’s teeth and keep off any plaque.

## **Greyt Health**

The retired racer has lived in a unique environment - from the time they're born, through their racing career, and finally into adoption. They bring with them some unique health issues that are not necessarily serious, but are different from other breeds. It is important to have an understanding of some of these differences as you care for your greyhound. Below are two websites that provide greyt information on greyhound health, followed by information on some of the most common concerns of new adopters.



<http://www.grassmere-animal-hospital.com/greyhounds.htm>

<http://www.greythealth.com/index.html>

Scars - It is not uncommon for the retiring racing greyhound to have scars. These are not necessarily from race injuries and rarely are they an indication of abuse. As you will quickly learn, greyhounds have paper thin skin and cut themselves easily. Playing rough with another, banging into a bush, another dog, scratching themselves on a fence – all of these can cause injuries that would be small scratches in other breeds but may result in a significant injury requiring stitches for a greyhound.

Bald Thigh Syndrome – There is no clear answer to what causes the “bald thighs” seen on retired racers. One school of thought attributes the condition to friction created by the greyhound moving around the crate and rubbing against the sides. Another theory is that the condition is of a metabolic nature caused by chronic high concentrations of cortisol, a hormone produced in response to stress. A third opinion is that it is a result of hypothyroidism, however treating with thyroid supplements does not always result in regrowth. Whatever the underlying cause is, bald thighs are usually of concern simply from a cosmetic standpoint and have no other systemic effect on your greyhound. In some greyhounds the hair quickly grows back; in others it may never completely regrow.

Skin – It is not unusual for your greyhound to have dry, flaky skin. Whether this comes from the change in climate, living conditions or a change in food, a supplement such as Grizzly Salmon Oil or any similar product containing Omega 3 fatty acids can easily be added to the food to improve both the skin and coat of your greyhound.

Blackheads – Frictional pressures against the bedding in the kennel can result in the greyhound developing blackheads that appear as clumps or individual dark colored dots just under the skin, usually on the deepest part of the chest. This is a purely cosmetic concern, however your adoption representative can provide advice on how to clear up the condition if it does not resolve itself after your greyhound has been in your home for a few months.

Diarrhea – Overfeeding, a change in food, new treats, or stress can bring on a case of diarrhea. If the diarrhea persists for more than a couple of days or if you notice any blood in the stool, your greyhound should be seen by a vet. For a mild case, the steps below will help your grey back to good gastric health.

1. Withhold food for 12 hours and limit water intake.
2. Give one child’s dose of Immodium or Kaopectate to provide some immediate relief.
3. Prepare a mixture of white rice with boiled, boneless, skinless chicken or with cooked lean ground beef, at a ratio of 1 cup rice to each ½ cup of meat. .
4. Feed 1 ½ cups of the mixture twice daily. You can gradually increase the amount fed as the diarrhea stops. Once the stool is firmed up, start introducing their regular food into the rice mixture, starting with ½ cup and gradually increasing.



## Fleas, Ticks and other Pesky Bugs

Greyhounds are extremely sensitive to chemicals and pesticides making flea and tick control an area that requires special effort on your part.

**DO NOT USE A FLEA COLLAR ON YOUR GREYHOUND!** Flea collars work by releasing chemicals into a dog's bloodstream. In most breeds of dogs, the liver and kidneys quickly filter out the toxins. A greyhound's liver and kidney do not work quickly enough to flush out the toxins, which then build up in the bloodstream, creating a serious health crisis or death.

Greyhounds should be treated only with products containing Pyrethrin and/or Pymretherin as the active ingredients. Safe flea products for use on greyhounds include: Mycodex Shampoo with Pyrethrins, Duocide Long Acting Flea Spray, Advantage, Advantage Plus, Sentinel (also used for heartworm, roundworms, hookworms, whipworms), and Revolution. There are also some natural citrus-based products flea products available as well as some that contain mint or eucalyptus oil.

Worms - There are a number of different worms that can affect your dog: roundworms, tapeworms, hookworms, whipworms and heartworms. Some live in the intestines and some in the tissue. Discuss with your veterinarian the type of worms commonly found in your area to familiarize yourself with the symptoms and to decide on a preventative or treatment plan. Safe deworming products for greyhounds include: Vercom Paste (roundworms, hookworms, whipworms, tapeworms) Nemex-2 (roundworms, hookworms), Droncit tablets (tapeworms), Drontal, Drontal Plus, Lopatol (roundworms, hookworms, and tapeworms), Panacur (hookworms), Interceptor (heartworm, roundworms, hookworms, and whipworms), Sentinel (heartworm, roundworms, hookworms, and whipworms), Revolution, Advantage, Advantage Multi, and Advantage Plus. Dewormers are toxic and should only be used if a fecal sample has been microscopically examined by a veterinarian and found to contain parasites.

Heartworms – The most important thing you should know about heartworms in dogs is how easy they are to prevent, but how difficult, painful and expensive heartworms are to cure. Heartworm is a serious and potentially fatal condition caused by parasitic worms that live in the heart, and blood vessels that supply blood to the lungs of infected animals. Mosquitoes spread the disease infecting a dog with a quick bite. If your area has been identified as having heartworm disease, the only way to protect your greyhound is with a prevention program. This involves giving your greyhound a pill or applying a solution to the skin once a month, usually from the beginning of May to the end of October. Some safe heartworm preventatives for greyhounds include: Interceptor, Heartgard, Heartgard 30 Plus (hookworm preventative also), Sentinel, Revolution, Advantage, and Advantage Multi.

Ticks – When large groups of dogs are housed together, as racers are in breeding, training and racing kennels, it is always a challenge to completely control ticks, resulting in possible exposure to tick-borne diseases. There are four tick borne diseases that greyhound adopters should be aware of: Lyme disease, Ehrlichiosis, Babesiosis, and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever. These diseases can move into an acute phase years after the initial tick bite.

There is no specific set of symptoms that point to a tick-borne disease; in fact, there is much overlap of the symptoms between these and other canine diseases. If your greyhound is



presenting with any of the symptoms below, a tick-borne disease should be tested for and ruled out before moving ahead with more extensive diagnostic procedures.

- High fever
- Depression or lethargy
- Anorexia
- Anemia
- Diarrhea or constipation
- Loss of appetite or loss of body weight
- Vomiting
- Nose bleeds, skin hemorrhage or any other unusual bleeding
- Swollen legs or lymph nodes
- Nervous system disorders, such as stiff gait, head tilt, seizures or twitching
- Pale gums and/or inner eye membranes
- Arthritis

The first step in diagnosing a tick-borne disease is a simple blood test known as a SNAP test. Further information can be found at <http://www.protatek.com/reflab/greyhnd.html> .

### **Veterinary Care**

Greyhounds are a very healthy breed with none of the inherited health problems commonly found in other large breeds. However, regular veterinary care is important to maintain the overall health of your greyhound.

Prior to your adoption, your dog was spayed or neutered, checked for heartworm and parasites, tested for tick-borne illnesses, and had annual and rabies vaccinations updated. This information is provided to you on the cover sheet that accompanies your Adoption Contract and a copy should be made to take with you for your first visit with the veterinarian. Annual check-ups and vaccinations should be scheduled near the anniversary of your greyhound's adoption.

Carefully choose a veterinarian to care for your greyhound. It is very important your vet understands the physical and physiological differences of greyhounds and is aware that some medications commonly used on other dogs cannot be used for greyhounds. Don't be afraid to ask questions of your vet, or to find another vet if you have concerns. If your vet objects to your questions, find another vet. It's your greyhound's life at stake!

The retired racer has some distinctive medical characteristics that can be confusing to a vet who has not worked with sighthounds and/or greyhounds specifically. These unique medical characteristics include the following.

- Larger hearts and lower heart rates (60-90 BPM) than other breeds of dogs.;
- Low-grade, benign heart murmurs are common.
- Blood pressure tends to be higher in a greyhound than in other breeds.



- Greyhound bloodwork has enough differences from "other dog" bloodwork to sometimes make it deceptively "normal" or "abnormal" if one isn't familiar with these differences. These differences are discussed below.

### Greyhound Bloodwork by Suzanne Stack, DVM

#### CBC - Complete Blood Count

RBC = Red Blood Cells

Hgb = Hemoglobin

PCV / HCT = Packed Cell Volume / Hematocrit

WBC = White Blood Cells

Platelets

#### NORMAL VALUES FOR:

	<u>Greyhounds</u>	<u>Other Dogs</u>
<b>RBC:</b>	7.4 - 9.0	5.5 - 8.5
<b>Hgb:</b>	19.0 - 21.5	12.0 - 18.0
<b>PCV:</b>	55 - 65	37 - 55

Greyhounds have significantly more red blood cells than other breeds. This elevates parameters for RBC, hemoglobin, and PCV / HCT, and is the reason greyhounds are desirable as blood donors. Most veterinarians are aware of this difference. Never accept a diagnosis of polycythemia - a once-in-a-lifetime-rare diagnosis of pathologic red cell overproduction - in a greyhound. Conversely, never interpret a greyhound PCV in the 30's - low 40's as being normal just because it is for other dogs. A greyhound with a PCV in the 30's - low 40's is an anemic greyhound. In Arizona, for example, a greyhound PCV < 50 is a red flag to check for Ehrlichia.

	<u>Greyhounds</u>	<u>Other Dogs</u>
<b>WBC</b>	3.5 - 6.5	6.0 - 17.0

Other greyhound CBC changes are less well known. Your greyhound's normally low WBC has caused more than one healthy greyhound to undergo a bone marrow biopsy in search of "cancer" or some other cause of the "low WBC."

	<u>Greyhounds</u>	<u>Other Dogs</u>
<b>Platelets:</b>	80,000 - 200,000	150,000 - 400,000

Likewise, greyhound platelet numbers are lower on average than other breeds, which might be mistakenly interpreted as a problem. It is thought that greyhound WBCs, platelets, and total protein may be lower to physiologically "make room" in the bloodstream for the increased red cell load. Confounding these normally low WBC and platelet numbers is the fact that Ehrlichia, a common blood parasite of greyhounds, can lower WBC and platelet counts. So if there is any doubt as to whether the WBC / platelet counts are normal, an Ehrlichia titer is always in order. The other classic changes with Ehrlichia are lowered PCV and elevated globulin and total protein. But bear in mind that every greyhound will not have every change, and Ehrlichia greyhounds can have normal CBCs.





## Chem Panel

T.P. = Total Protein

Globulin

Creatinine

T4

### NORMAL VALUES FOR:

	<u>Greyhounds</u>	<u>Other Dogs</u>
T.P	4.5 - 6.2	5.4 - 7.8
Globulin	2.1 - 3.2	2.8 - 4.2

Greyhound total proteins tend to run on the low end of normal - T.P.s in the 5.0's and 6.0's are the norm. While the albumin fraction of T.P. is the same as other dogs, the globulin component is lower.

	<u>Greyhounds</u>	<u>Other Dogs</u>
<b>Creatinine</b>	0.8 - 1.6	0 - 1.0

Greyhound creatinines run higher than other breeds as a function of their large lean muscle mass. A study at the Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine found that 80% of retired greyhounds they sampled had creatinine values up to 1.6 times as high as the top of the standard reference range for "other dogs." As a lone finding, an "elevated creatinine" is not indicative of impending kidney failure. If the BUN and urinalysis are normal, so is the "elevated" creatinine.

	<u>Greyhounds</u>	<u>Other Dogs</u>
<b>T4</b>	0.5 - 3.66 (mean 1.47+/- .63)	1.52 - 3.60

These figures are from a University of Florida study of thyroid function in 221 greyhounds - 97 racers, 99 broods, and 25 studs - so it included both racers and "retired." While greyhound thyroid levels are a whole chapter unto themselves, a good rule of thumb is that greyhound T4s run about half that of other breeds.

## Urinalysis

And lastly, the good news - greyhound urinalysis is the same as other breeds. It is normal for males to have small to moderate amounts of bilirubin in the urine.

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Reprinted with permission from <http://www.greythealth.com/blood.html>





## **Surgery and Anesthesia**

Before allowing your dog to be anaesthetized or tranquilized ensure that your veterinarian is familiar with the procedures and dosages appropriate for a greyhound. Because greyhounds have so much muscle bulk and so little fat, anesthetic drugs react more powerfully on them. The normal dose of anesthetic for another breed of dog of the same weight could be fatal to your greyhound.

It is important that to monitor a greyhound's temperature throughout surgery as malignant hyperthermia does occur. You and your vet should also be aware that your greyhound may develop spontaneous bleeding one-to-four days after routine minor surgery or trauma.

Additional information on greyhound anesthesia is available at <http://www.greyhealth.com/anesthesia.html>

## **Hidden Hazards**

Familiar, everyday things - indoors, outdoors and in our cars - are NOT familiar to greyhounds and pose a hidden hazard to the newly retired racer.

### **Indoor Hazards**

Bare floors – The greyhound has never been on linoleum, tile, laminate or hardwood floors. A little slip can lead to a life-long phobia. Placing a few rubber-backed scatter rugs around will help your greyhound adjust to the unfamiliar surface.

Food – Greyhounds love food! They especially love whatever their human family may be eating. Although NSGAA advises against feeding your greyhound ANY treats from the table or table scraps after a meal, we recognize that this is a personal choice. It is important to be aware of the following foods that pose a health hazard to your greyhound.

- Avocado – the leaves, fruit, seeds and bark may contain a toxic principle known as persin that may cause stomach upset. Ingestion of the pit can lead to an obstruction in the gastrointestinal tract.
- Raw bread dough – the warm, moist environment of the stomach provides an ideal environment for the yeast to multiply, resulting in an expanding mass of dough in the stomach.
- Chocolate - the compounds in chocolate that cause toxicosis are caffeine and theobromine, which belong to a group of chemicals called methylxanthines. The rule of thumb with chocolate is “the darker it is, the more dangerous it is.” White chocolate has very few methylxanthines and is of low toxicity.
- Alcoholic drinks - ingesting a small amount of a product containing alcohol can cause significant intoxication, resulting in vomiting, loss of coordination, disorientation and stupor.
- Grapes and raisins – Although some dogs can eat grapes and raisins with no ill effects, ingestion of grapes and raisins have recently been associated with the development of kidney failure in dogs.



- Macadamia nuts - Although macadamia nut toxicosis is unlikely to be fatal in dogs, ingestion can lead to temporary weakness in their rear legs, pain, tremors and low grade fevers. These signs will gradually subside over a couple of days.
- Moldy foods – some moldy foods produce toxins that cause serious or life-threatening reactions in dogs. As it is not possible to determine at home whether the mold growing on a particular food is toxic or not, avoid feeding your greyhound any food that has mold on it.
- Onions and Garlic - All members of the onion family (shallots, onions, garlic, scallions, etc.) contain compounds that can damage dogs' red blood cells if ingested in sufficient quantities. While it's uncommon for dogs to eat enough raw onions and garlic to cause serious problems, exposure to concentrated forms of onion or garlic, such as dehydrated onions, onion soup mix or garlic powder, may put your greyhound at risk.
- Xylitol - This is a non-caloric sweetener that is widely used in sugar-free gum, as well as in sugar-free baked products. In dogs, ingestion of xylitol can lead to a rapid and severe drop in blood sugar levels.

Household cleaners and chemicals - The key to safe use of all cleaners lies in reading and following product directions for proper use and storage. As a general rule, all cleaning products should be securely stored in a cabinet, out of the reach of your greyhound.

Kitchens – Whether it's the temptation of a nose getting too close to the good smells coming off of the hot stove or the danger to you and the greyhound if you trip over them while carrying hot pots and pans, the kitchen has its own hidden hazards. We encourage you to keep your kitchen “greyhound free” whenever you are cooking or baking.

Paints and solvents – Paint thinners, mineral spirits, and other solvents can cause severe irritation or chemical burns if swallowed or if they come in contact with your greyhound's skin.

Plants –A good source of information and a listing of the most common houseplants that are toxic to pets can be found at <http://dogs.about.com/od/dogandpuppyhealth/a/Poisonous-Plants-And-Your-Dog.htm>

Rockers and recliners – Always check where your greyhound is before you recline the chair or start rocking.

## Outdoor Hazards

Barbed wire fences – To prevent serious injury, be extremely cautious when visiting friends in rural areas that may have barbed wire fences. Barbed wire fences are hard to see – especially if you are a greyhound running at full speed, chasing after something that has been spotted on the other side of the fence.

Birdbaths, ponds, pools and other water sources – Any water sources in the yard should be off-limits. Your greyhound will be tempted to drink from any available water source on a hot day. However, the chemicals or bacteria in the water can lead to mild to severe digestive tract upsets. Pools and ponds also pose a drowning hazard to your greyhound as most of them have never had the opportunity to learn to swim.



Branches and sticks– Pay particular attention to sharp branches that stick out from hedges or bushes and little sticks that may be lying around in the yard. While racing around, your greyhound can run into these or step on them; leading to a serious injury.

Cocoa bean mulch is made of discarded hulls or shells of the cocoa bean, which are by-products of chocolate production. These hulls can contain the same dangerous toxins as chocolate. The tempting “chocolate-like” smell may attract your greyhound.

Insect stings – Your greyhound will be bothered by pesky mosquitoes as much as you are while outdoors. Mosquito bites can be reduced by using a repellent formulated for dogs. Many greyhounds also enjoy chasing flying insects, which can result in getting stung by a wasp or a bee. For immediate relief of the stinging, remove the stinger and ice the site of the sting. If you notice significant swelling and/or discomfort, a child’s dose of Benedryl can provide relief. Any signs of labored breathing and pronounced swelling in the face/neck area requires immediate veterinarian attention.

Lawn chemicals – Keep fertilizers, insecticides and other lawn and garden chemicals in a shed or garage and well away from your greyhound. When spraying or treating with chemicals, keep your greyhound off the affected area until the chemicals have dried or been watered down. Watch for marked areas when walking in public areas - lawn services are required to mark treated areas with yellow flags or signs.

Plants - Set up a fence around your vegetable and/or flower garden as some of the most dangerous spring and summertime threats to pets in the yard are common flowers and plants.

Power equipment and tools – Keep your greyhound safely inside whenever lawn equipment or power tools are being used outside. Flying debris from lawn mowers or trimmers can cause serious damage.

### **Hazards in the Car**

Open doors and windows – Keep a firm grip on the leash until everyone is in the car, and the doors are ready to be closed. Double check where your greyhound is before rolling the windows up or down. Your greyhound will gladly jump into the back seat and back out through an open door on the other side of the car. Do not allow your greyhound to hang his head out of the window while you are driving as sticks, stones, or bugs could cause eye, ear or facial injuries.

Securing your greyhound – Secure your greyhound in a crate or with a seatbelt for safety. Another option is to install a pet barrier to prevent the greyhound from flying forward in case of a sudden stop.

Martingale collars – As a greyhound’s head is smaller than his/her neck, they can easily back out of a regular buckle-type collar. The Martingale collar is a “humane choke collar” because it is made from webbing and other softer materials that will tighten appropriately around the neck but not harm the throat and skin of your greyhound. However, if it is not used properly, it can be downright dangerous to your greyhound. The martingale collar should never be left on your greyhound when unattended. When traveling, the collar should be removed as soon as your



greyhound is secured in the vehicle, and put on again once you reach the destination and before opening any of the vehicle doors.

Heat stroke – Heat stroke is a preventable medical emergency. Your vehicle quickly becomes an oven in warmer temperatures. Leaving the windows open a crack does nothing to relieve the rapid rise in the interior temperature of a vehicle. If your greyhound cannot go everywhere with you when you get out of the car, for safety's sake leave your greyhound at home.

### **Additional Resources and Information**

It's a whole new world for you, your family, and your greyhound. All of you may be a little scared, nervous or even baffled at times during this adjustment period.

This manual was designed to provide you general information to help you during the adjustment period and beyond. However, help is always close at hand. We encourage you to stay connected with your NSGAA adoption representative. With their years of experience, your adoption rep can likely answer any questions or concerns you have and provide helpful suggestions on any situations that arise.

We encourage you and your greyhound to become actively involved in the greyhound community. Getting together with other greyhound families for walks, meet and greets, or other events provides an opportunity for you to share your experiences, find answers to questions and to make some greyt friends.

Welcome to NSGAA's greyhound family.

