

# Parasite Prevention in Greyhounds

## **GRSA Welfare Policy - Relevant Standards**

Pg 17:

All greyhounds are to be treated with a safe, effective and regular worming program. Greyhounds should be on a preventative program for heartworms.

- External parasites such as fleas and ticks should be treated as needed or on a regular basis as part of a preventative program to prevent infestation.
- Parasite treatment is to be stored and used accordingly to manufacturer's instruction. Parasite treatments used must be manufactured and safe for use on canines.

## **What is a Parasite?**

A parasite is an organism that is dependent on the life function of another organism. Practically speaking, they are smaller organisms that live on or in and at the expense of a larger organism (called a host). They exploit the host for development and survivability during one or more stages of its life.

Parasites are everywhere, quite literally. You will find parasites on your hands, in your gut, in your mouth, and on anything else living... including your greyhounds. The primary factors we consider are those that prohibit or impact the bodily function of an organism (Commensalism/ parasitism), instead of co-habiting or working with such (mutualism/symbiosis).

Transmission can occur either directly, or indirectly, based on the parasite and its life cycle. Generally, infection comes from the consumption of worms or eggs in their environment. Some eggs can lie dormant in the ground for excessive periods of time (years), causing a repetitive cycle of exposure. Exposure may also come from a dam to her pups via either the placenta (during pregnancy) or via milk (during lactation stages).

The best control strategies include managing the environment (cleaning using disinfectants), managing vector populations (number of greyhounds which can be infected), avoiding contamination between fecal matter and feed, and storing meat hygienically to prevent ingestion of certain parasites.

Worming should play a vital role in a greyhound's general health management. Puppies should play particular importance due to their decreased resistance to the effects of worms. Heavy worm burden = life threatening infection. Please speak with your regular veterinarian regarding routine parasite prevention products and managing the increased antiparasitic drug resistance prevalent today.

## What types of Parasites should I be weary of?

Parasite	About	Clinical Signs
<p><b>Hookworm</b> [Ancylostoma caninum, A.braziliense, A. ceylanicum, A.tubaeforma, Uncinaria stenocephala]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blood sucking parasite.</li> <li>• Ingested directly in the gut or through skin penetration.</li> <li>• Tracheal migration through to the lungs and intestine.</li> <li>• <b>Zoonotic</b> (transmissible to humans).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Severe haemorrhagic (bloody) diarrhoea</b></li> <li>• <b>Death</b></li> <li>• Loss of appetite</li> <li>• Anemia</li> <li>• Lethargy</li> </ul>
<p><b>Round Worm</b> [Toxocara canis and Toxascaris leonina]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Found in the small intestine.</li> <li>• Faecal-Oral transmission, transmammary + transplacental transmission (through mother to pups)</li> <li>• <b>Zoonotic</b></li> </ul>	<p>Primary symptoms in Pups include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pot bellied</li> <li>• Cough</li> <li>• Nasal Discharge</li> <li>• Diarrhoea</li> <li>• Vomiting</li> <li>• Intestinal blockage</li> <li>• <b>Death</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Tape Worm</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transmission through ingestion of larvae from an infected host (mice, fleas, etc.)</li> <li>• Cause abnormal eating habits (excessive)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No obvious symptoms</li> <li>• Rice like segments may be found in stool or around anus.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Whip Worm</b> [Trichuris spp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mouth spear used to slash and shred tissues and blood vessels.</li> <li>• Eggs found in faeces; larvae hatch in small intestine upon ingestion. Invade large intestine and caecum.</li> <li>• Faecal-oral transmission.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large bowel diarrhea.</li> <li>• Fresh blood + mucus.</li> <li>• Abdominal discomfort.</li> <li>• Tenesmus (inability to empty the bowel).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Coccidia</b> [Cystoisospora]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Located in the intestinal tract.</li> <li>• Transmission through ingestion of eggs on plants, soil or in faeces.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally no detectable clinical signs.</li> <li>• Possible diarrhea, fever or weight loss.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Heartworm</b> [Dirofilaria immitis]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spread by blood sucking insects where the infective strain lives.</li> <li>• Circulates in the blood of their host, or dermal connective tissue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ranges from asymptomatic (no symptoms) to <b>death</b>.</li> <li>• Rapid breathing</li> <li>• Coughing</li> </ul>

## **Catching It Early**

Monitor your greyhounds for early signs of parasite infestation and seek veterinary treatment if your greyhound or puppy displays:

- Weight loss and inappetence
- Diarrhea and vomiting
- Swollen stomach
- Dull coat
- Coughing
- Scooting (rubbing their bottom on ground)

Please contact your local veterinarian for any concerns or queries regarding parasite protection and prevention. Participants must ensure they are up to date with all relevant policies and procedures regarding greyhound care and welfare.