

# How to Care for my Greyhound

Flying Irish Greyhounds (FIG), Charity Number 20102241, CHY 22280



This adoption booklet gives general guidance to help the first-time greyhound adopter to understand their new family member and to help prospective adopters discern whether to choose a greyhound for a pet.

## **GENERAL CARE OF YOUR GREYHOUND**

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# GENERAL CARE OF YOUR GREYHOUND

**Your greyhound must be welcome in the home as a family member by all members of the household.**

**SLEEP** They will need a quiet warm place to sleep that is free of drafts, within the home. The greyhound cannot be confined to a shed, garage, utility room or storage area.

## **DAYTIME**

FIG greyhounds are adopted as pets who are welcome within the family's living area.

**Your greyhound should not be left alone unattended for more than 4 hours maximum. If you are away from home more than 4 hours, you will need to employ a dog walker. This is required not only for your dog's well-being but access to the outdoors will encourage your dog to drink adequate amounts of water to maintain healthy kidneys and bladder.**

**FOOD** Feed your greyhound two meals per day, morning and evening. Check that they are maintaining a healthy weight. As a general rule of thumb, the outline of the last two ribs should be easily felt (**but not seen**) by the hand. If the last two ribs cannot be palpated, the greyhound is overweight. If more than two ribs are felt, they are underweight. Adjust their food amounts accordingly.

In the evening, add a little water to the dry food. Cooked meat, broth and cooked vegetables (carrots, sweet potato, broccoli, cabbage, lettuce) will add nutrients and flavour. Porridge oats, kelp powder or tree bark powder can also be added. Greyhounds also like sardines, natural yoghurt, cottage cheese, raw carrots and fruit.

Many dog owners are switching to raw diets for the added health benefits. Prepared raw meals can be purchased & kept frozen.

**FEEDING** Raised bowls are easier for eating.

**WATER** Your greyhound must have access to fresh water at all times, preferably from a large container or bucket.

**COUNTERS** Clear all counter-top surfaces of food, important papers, laptops, mobile phones or electrical wiring. Greyhounds are often referred to as **Counter-surfers**. Their height allows them to easily surf the kitchen counter.

**GARDEN** Your garden must be securely fenced & gates kept secure. If your lawn is cut by a contractor be sure the gate is secured immediately after maintenance. Hedges are not secure boundaries. Electric, invisible or barbed wire fences are not acceptable boundaries. **A six foot high fence is recommended.**

## **WALKS**

**In Ireland, greyhounds are required by law to be 'on lead' at all times in public.**

Your greyhound will need two 20 minute walks per day or one 40 minute walk. Walks are essential for exercise and equally important for creating relationship with your dog.

Most greyhounds have had 'soft lead' training. If the dog 'pulls' (ie. taut lead), flick the lead, then allow the lead to go slack (ie. soft). The dog will pace himself with your steps.

It is good for greyhounds to have time 'off lead' in a private, securely fenced area (your garden or a private area you have access to). Ensure the property is free of branches or debris.

**AFFECTION** Greyhounds are often described as aloof. They simply need time to get to know you. Greyhounds respond best to gentleness, not overly exuberant attention.

Greyhounds love to be petted down either side of their spine and enjoy having the base of their ears or behind their ears rubbed.

Towelling is a good daily practice to bond with your greyhound. Place a towel over the nape of the dog's neck and gently rub down either side of the spine.

**BATHS** Greyhounds have a short-haired coat. Minor dirt like mud or fox poo can be wiped off with water and dog shampoo. A full bath is recommended only once a year at most.

## WHAT EQUIPMENT DO I NEED?

You will need a martingale collar, an ID/tag, an ID/tag collar, a lead, soft bedding, a jacket and water & food bowls.



**MARTINGALE COLLAR** Greyhounds require a martingale collar. Regular collars will pull off their foldable 'rose' ears. A martingale is fashioned to prevent the head from slipping through the collar. A collar width of 1 ½ to 2 inches (40 to 50mm) is recommended to protect their throat from injury.

**ID/TAG COLLAR** Martingale collars can be quite bulky to wear inside the house. An ID/tag collar can be worn inside the house and the martingale can be used for walks only.

**ID/TAG** An ID/tag with your name and telephone number in case your dog is lost.

**HARNESS** A harness may be used instead of a martingale collar. Harnesses can prevent postural strain. Caution, dogs can learn to pull out of some harnesses.

**LEADS** You will need a 6 foot lead to walk your greyhound. It should be made of strong fabric or leather. **DO NOT USE RETRACTABLE LEADS.** A startled greyhound can easily accelerate to 40mph and snap a retractable lead or wrap the lead around someone's legs (human or dog) causing burns/cuts. Please do not use retractable leads with your greyhound or employ a dog walker that uses retractable leads.

**SOFT BEDDING** Due to little body fat, your greyhound will require a large soft comfy bed or snuggle ball. A dog bed can be a new experience for a greyhound straight from kennels.

## **COATS AND JACKETS**

Greyhounds have little body fat. In cold weather they require jackets to keep dry & warm.

**RAIN:** **Waterproof jackets or waterproof fleece coats** can be worn on rainy days.

**WINTER:** A **thicker coat** may be needed outside in the winter. If your house is cold at night, your greyhound may need a **fleece coat to sleep overnight**. If your dog wakes in the night due to cold or draft, their first instinct will be to urinate. Best to prevent this by keeping them warm with a fleece coat & ensuring there are no drafts by moving or raising their bed.

**RAISED FOOD BOWL** Raised bowls make eating easier. We recommend a stainless steel non-skid rubber bottomed bowl, large enough to hold 4 or 5 cups of food. Place it on top of a stool at a height that is convenient for them.

**LARGE WATER BOWL** We recommend using a large container or bucket for water. Your greyhound will drink more freely than from a bowl.

**CRATE** A **wire crate** may be needed for some dogs to help them settle in. The crate must be at least **4 feet long by 3 feet high by 2 feet wide** and be comfortable for them to stretch out and stand up to turn around. A light blanket can be placed over the crate.

**TOYS** Some greyhounds love to play with toys, others can't be bothered. **Ensure there are no removable parts or squeakers that your greyhound may swallow.**

Enrichment games & toys (kongs) stuffed with food may help to mentally stimulate and entertain your greyhound.

**PET GATE** A pet gate (3 ½ feet high) may be used to restrict use of the entire house if you are away for a few hours.

# RESPONSIBLE OWNERSHIP

**Complying with all relevant laws and following the guidelines offered in this booklet.**

## LEADS

**In Ireland, greyhounds are required by law to be 'on lead' in public places by means of a sufficiently strong lead (Control of Dogs Act, 1986).** Next to the cheetah, the greyhound is the fastest animal on the planet. Greyhounds can accelerate to 40mph in a matter of seconds. They are not permitted 'off lead' in public for their own safety & the safety of others. A greyhound could run in front of an oncoming car or cause injury by colliding with a pedestrian.

**However, greyhounds may be allowed 'off lead' in a private, securely fenced area.** This is especially good for their muscles & joints and for their overall sense of well-being.

## MICROCHIPS

**All dogs must be microchipped and registered with an approved microchip database provider to obtain an up-to-date Dog Microchipping Certificate.**

## SMALL DOG BREEDS

Many greyhounds are grand living with small dogs. Your greyhound's behaviour with small dog breeds will be assessed beforehand. A number of short training sessions and introductions may be required. Always exercise caution and common sense.

## MUZZLES

**Greyhounds are excluded from the list of dog breeds that are required to wear a muzzle in public (Control of Dog Regulations, 1998).**

In Ireland, greyhounds are not required to wear muzzles in public places.

However, there are times that a muzzle is recommended. Greyhounds can be competitive when they are running off lead. Even a small playful nip can tear their thin skin. If a group of greyhounds are running off lead in a securely fenced area, muzzles are recommended.

## **CHILDREN**

### **Greyhounds are quiet, gentle-natured dogs.**

Greyhounds are quiet, gentle-natured dogs and for this reason, bond well with children. FIG prefers to rehome greyhounds to families with children over 8 years old. At 8 years of age the child will have learned appropriate behaviour in handling a dog. Likewise an energetic greyhound would be less likely to collide with an older child. If the family has sighthound experience or the child shows maturity in handling a dog, we may approve adoption to a family with younger children.

**\*\*Please instruct your children to stand like “statues” when your greyhound is running in zoomie mode.\*\***

## **LAST BUT NOT LEAST, CATS**

We have rehomed a number of greyhounds who live happily with a cat. After passing a cat-trainable assessment test, the greyhound may be approved for adoption into a home with a cat. Further training is required to gradually introduce the greyhound to living with your cat.

## **GREYHOUND TERMS**

**ZOOMIES** When your greyhound is running at full speed. **Be sure to stand still.**

**ROACHING** When your greyhound lies on their back with all four paws in the air. This is a sure sign that your greyhound is happy in his/her new home.

**ROO** Some greyhounds make a howling sound when they are excited.

**CHATTER** Some greyhounds chatter their teeth when they are excited to go for a walk.

**COUNTER SURF** If your greyhound is at kitchen counter height, they may choose to snack/surf off the kitchen counter.

# YOUR GREYHOUND'S HEALTH

**Your greyhound will require regular veterinary care and good quality food.**

**HEALTH INSURANCE** is highly recommended.

**VACCINATIONS** Our greyhounds receive full vaccinations, DHPPi, Leptospirosis and Kennel Cough. Follow the advice of your veterinarian re boosters. Many adopters choose to vaccinate every 3 to 4 years. This can be verified by a blood titre test from your veterinarian.

**TEETH** Greyhounds can develop dental problems which can later cause health problems. Regular brushing and chewing raw meaty bones can prevent this. Routine veterinary dental cleanings or non-anaesthetic descaling are recommended.

**SKIN / COAT** Greyhounds have thin skin which can easily tear. Ensure your property is free of branches or debris they can injure themselves on. If your greyhound has a dry coat, dandruff or bald thighs, kelp powder, oats and fish oil can be added to their food.

**NAILS** Long nails can affect their toes, gait and mobility.  
**Greyhounds need their nails trimmed monthly.**

**TOE PADS** Greyhounds have soft delicate toepads which are prone to corns. For prevention, avoid walking on hot or freezing cold footpaths and sharp stones or gravel. For the senior greyhound, Burt's hand salve and Epsom salt soaks can often help.

**EARS** need to be checked & cleaned regularly. This can be done with a small absorbent cloth & a little olive oil.

**GOOD POO:** Your greyhound's poo may be the first indication of a health problem.

**Diarrhea** i) Skip the next meal. Give water only. The second day, give rice with chicken. ii) Tree bark powder added to the food is great for healing the intestinal lining. iii) try changing their food iv) order a stool test from veterinarian. Avoid using antibiotics without a stool test.

**Constipation** Aloe vera juice (not gel), slippery elm or tree bark powder & probiotic can all be helpful.

**BLOAT IS A VETERINARY EMERGENCY.** Bloat can be prevented by encouraging the dog to rest immediately after a meal.



## **‘SETTLING IN’ THE FIRST WEEK**

**If your greyhound has any difficulties “settling in”, please do not hesitate to contact us.**

### **TIME TO ADJUST TO THEIR NEW SURROUNDINGS**

Introduce your greyhound to your home gradually. Give them plenty of time to adjust. Stairs, tiled or wooden floors, hoovers, dog beds, even taking a biscuit from your hand, may be a new experience for them. If you have ever visited another country where you didn’t speak the language, you will understand what it is like for a greyhound to visit your home for the first time. Everything is completely foreign and new to them.

**FIRST DAY TOUR** Take your greyhound ‘on lead’ through the house, show them their bed and food & water bowls. Lead them around the garden. Show them the boundaries and wait for them to eliminate outside. Praise them, give them a treat and refer to them by name.

Let him/her explore your home. Ideally take your greyhound for a walk nearby where there are few distractions. If you have other dogs be sure to walk them together on the 1<sup>st</sup> day.

**AFFECTION** Give your greyhound time to get to know you.

**NOISE** It is best to **keep noise to a minimum**. Keep the television at a low volume.

**FLOORS** Your greyhound may have difficulty walking on shiny laminate or wooden floors. They may need throw rugs or runners to help them to learn to walk on shiny floors.

**STAIRS** Your greyhound may have difficulty climbing stairs at first. With encouragement, they can learn to manage stairs.

## **BEDTIME**

Having the same routine every night is recommended to help them settle in for the night. About 11:00pm, take them outside and wait till they eliminate, praise them. Bring them inside and close the curtains. Give them a treat near their bed. Refer to them by name when you are offering the treat. Then a short phrase you intend to use every night such as “okay bedtime”. Turn out the lights & leave the room.

**The first week your greyhound may feel anxious or lonely at night. It may be best to put their bed near your bedroom door. You can move their bed once they become more secure in their new home. A night light may also help them to feel at ease.**

If they cry or bark in the night, don't get up. Reassure them with your voice, tell them kindly but firmly, 'Go to sleep'. Wait 5 to 10 minutes. In most cases after a few whimpers or barking, they will go to sleep. Do not get up to pet them or sleep with them. This may worsen the situation. They may wake in the night and whimper or bark again. Repeat the same response as before. Repetition will be familiar and calming.

**If you have any difficulty, do not hesitate to phone us. The sooner the problem is addressed the better.**

## **HOUSE-TRAINING**

**When your greyhound performs outside, praise & reward him.**

Many ex-racing greyhounds have been trained not to toilet where they sleep. For this reason, with proper guidance, they can be house-trained in a matter of days.

Be sure to take your greyhound out to eliminate first thing in the morning about 7:00am, immediately after meals and before bedtime, about 11:00pm. Otherwise take them outside on lead to the designated toilet area every 2-3 hours and wait until they eliminate. Wait as long as is needed. **When they perform, praise them & give them a treat.** Do not scold your dog if they have an accident in the house, instead take them outside to the designated toilet area & wait. If they can perform, praise and reward them. Scolding can worsen matters.

Immediately clean soiled areas with a solution of **Bio laundry detergent**. This will remove all traces of ammonia. Dogs will repeatedly return to a previously soiled area if the ammonia has not been properly cleaned. New rugs with 'factory smell' can also encourage accidents.

# TRAINING

**Praise and reward your greyhound for good behaviour.**

**Building a positive relationship** with your greyhound is the best foundation for training. Greyhounds are gentle, sensitive dogs who are attuned to their owner's energy and attitude. If your manner is gentle, calm and confident, this will be transferred to your greyhound.

**Routine** is essential for greyhounds. Scheduling activities (waking, walks, meals, toileting, treats, bedtime) for the same time each day lends a sense of security. Routine also builds relationship. Dogs have precise clocks.

**Be sure to praise and reward your greyhound for good behaviour.** Use their name often when praising and rewarding them.

Signs of anxiety such as panting, pacing or whimpering **often have a simple solution.** Greyhounds are known to over-exaggerate discontent for a variety of reasons, their favourite bed is taken, they want to go out, they bump their dew claw, you step on their toe, they're uncertain as to where you expect them to sleep, etc. If signs of anxiety persist, it may be necessary to **consult a behaviourist.**

**Sharing.** Some greyhounds become very attached to their favourite things such as their dog bed, their favourite toy, the sofa or the human bed. In other words, your new family member may have difficulty sharing. For this reason, **we highly recommend a 'no dogs on the sofa or human bed' rule for the first 6 months.** After 6 months of 'settling in', sharing becomes easier.

**A calm but firm "uh uh" is often enough to correct an unwanted behaviour.**

**Common sense.** It is your responsibility to train your dog re appropriate behaviour.

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