

Greyhound Gazette

A quarterly publication for greyhound owners and other dog lovers

March 1, 2009 – Issue 1



Welcome to the first edition of Greyhound Gazette (GG), a quarterly publication by a group of volunteers, in association with the The Greyhound Supporters of the National Capital Region (GSNCR). The purpose of the publication is to provide information of interest to greyhound owners in particular, and owners of any other breed in general. In future issues, the GG is planning to feature articles on health matters, bust some myths associated with greyhounds, provide information on greyhounds specific products, services, and events, provide a list of

Websites of interest and share some lighter moments of life with the hounds. The GG may be contacted, via Email greyhoundgazette@gsncr.ca (Heather).

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The Gazette Committee

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Melanie Begin
Heather Bourdon
Carol Harkness
Frank Shaffer



Winston Gomes demonstrates Hound Walking 101
One is easy
Two a handful
Three a challenge
Four a skill
But
Five a definite art

The winners of the "Name the Newsletter" contest are:
Carol Harkness {Cleo & Harry} won the first prize and Jackie Genaille {Dime Tyme} won the second prize. Congratulations to both.

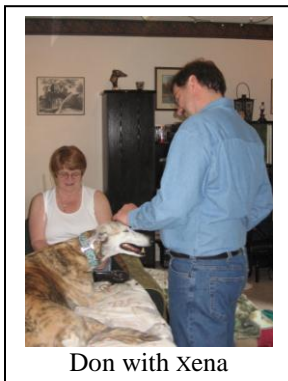
Blood Donor Clinic

Canine Blood Transfusions

Give blood, it's the gift of life. Blood, it's in you to give. Those are slogans that we're used to hearing on a regular basis. Did you know that it is equally true in the world of canines?

Just like humans, dogs and cats may require blood transfusions (transfusion therapy) to treat trauma, treat some diseases or for surgery. And, just like humans, dogs have blood types which are commonly referred to as Dog Erythrocyte Antigens {DEA}, followed by a number. Currently, there appear to be at least 12 different known DEA types.

Put simply, most dogs can receive the "universal" dog blood type, regardless of their own blood type. Tests are available to ensure a good "cross match" between your dog and the blood donor.



Don with Xena

In an emergency situation, if a dog has never had a blood transfusion, it can receive a transfusion from another dog that is of a different type since dog blood does not have antibodies. However, after the first transfusion, antibodies develop which require that a good "crossmatch" is achieved between compatible donors. So, it is a good idea to know your hound's blood type in advance of receiving a blood transfusion.

Blood Products

There are four different blood products that can be made from a single donation of whole blood. Whole blood can be divided into two separate blood products, one of which may be divided into two more.

Packed Red Blood Cells (RBC's) – these are normally used in patients with acute or chronic bleeding, hemolysis (red cell destruction), kidney disease, and bone marrow disorders.



Jayne with Rooster

Fresh-frozen Plasma (FFP) – contains all clotting factors and a blood plasma protein called albumin, and is used to treat bleeding due to poisoning from ingesting rodent pest control products (anticoagulant rodenticide toxicity), liver failure or congenital clotting deficiencies.

Cryoprecipitate (CRYO) - Cryoprecipitate is rich in an essential blood clotting factor called factor VIII and von Willebrand's factor, so it is used for the treatment of hemophilia A and von Willebrand's disease. It can also be used as an agent to stop bleeding or hemorrhage in surgery.

Cryopoor Plasma - Cryoprecipitate-poor plasma contains all clotting factors except von Willebrand's factor and factor VIII. Therefore, it can be used in the treatment of rodenticide toxicity as well as the replacement of proteins (albumin as well as antibodies called immunoglobulins).

Greyhound Blood Donor Clinics in Ottawa

Retired racing greyhounds are considered to be ideal blood donors because they have the perfect vascular system (large veins) for bleeding, are considered to be within the ideal size and weight range for donating blood, and are generally very laid back throughout the entire process. In addition, approximately 80% of retired racing greyhounds are equivalent to the human "Universal" blood type.

In January 2006, the Greyhound Supporters began working with The LifeStream Animal Blood Bank, which is based in Kingston, Ontario. Once a month, the Greyhound Supporters hosts a greyhound blood donor clinic in Ottawa, and six hounds are scheduled to give blood. Each donation takes approximately 20 minutes and greyhound owners are invited to stay with their hounds during the blood extraction procedure. The donor hounds are as important to LifeStream as the blood donation recipients, so significant efforts are made to ensure that the donation is as pleasant and stress-free as possible. In fact, some of our donor dogs have been known to fall asleep during the process.

Are there benefits to having your dog donate blood?

Most canine blood donor programs, such as the one at the University of Guelph, offer benefits to its donor dogs and their families. In the case of LifeStream, the following is offered:

1. A complete blood count profile (CBC test) plus heartworm screening at each donation.
2. Complimentary blood typing and a blood type collar tag.
3. Complimentary canine blood profile testing for Heartworm, Babesia canis, Ehrlichia spp., Haemobartenalla spp., Lyme Disease and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever.
4. If your greyhound (or another member of your canine family) requires a blood transfusion, the blood products will be provided at no cost to your veterinarian, for the lifetime of the animal.

The value of canine blood donations is inestimable. For most of us, our greyhounds and other canine companions are part of our family. Having access to blood products allows veterinarians the opportunity to offer their clients more options in lifesaving practices, surgical procedures, cancer treatments and more. Having access to blood products gives those of us with dogs with the likelihood of longer life expectancies for both the blood donors and the blood recipients.

Can my greyhound become a blood donor?

If your greyhound meets LifeStream's donor criteria, then yes, it can become a blood donor with the Greyhound Supporters Blood Donor program. For more information, contact info@gsncr.ca

Blood – give the gift of life

Health & Wellness - Dr. Wade Wright of the Kanata Animal Hospital



Hypothyroidism is the one of the most common diseases in dogs. Given the high prevalence, it would be easy to assume that it is easy to diagnose however this is not the case especially in greyhounds. There are some pitfalls with that assumption which is why it thought to be one of the most common misdiagnosed ailments in veterinary medicine.

First let's discuss a little background on the thyroid gland and thyroid hormone. The thyroid gland is located along the trachea or the windpipe of the dog's throat. It should not be palpable however it is just below the Adam's apple. Thyroid hormone is produced by the thyroid gland and there are 2 forms of the thyroid hormone—T3 which is the active form and t4 which is the inactive form. Thyroid hormone has an incredible impact on the body. In simple terms it affects the body's metabolic rate—remember how you feel without that cup of coffee in the morning? That is how your cells feel if deprived of thyroid hormone. As a result of a deficiency, multiple organs are sluggish and do not work to their full potential. Think of the thyroid gland as the Starbucks barista who serves the coffee.

Now who controls the thyroid gland? It is the pituitary gland which is found in the brain which makes thyroid stimulating hormone or TSH. The pituitary gland is the cashier at Starbucks that calls out the coffee order and the actual coffee order is the TSH. TSH essentially tells the thyroid gland when to and when not to make thyroid hormone.

So hypothyroidism is a deficiency in thyroid hormone and it usually occurs due to atrophy of the thyroid gland or production of antibodies which work against the thyroid gland. Most hypothyroid dogs are senior in age.

The clinical signs of hypothyroid include skin problems (infections, hair loss, dry skin), obesity, lack of energy, slow heart rate, low body temperature, behavioural changes such as dullness or aggression and poor fertility. There are a list of other organ systems that are affected however the previously mentioned are the most common. In short many things can go wrong when you do not have adequate amount of thyroid hormone.

In dogs that are suspected of hypothyroidism, a series of blood tests are needed to confirm a diagnosis. Let's revisit the type of thyroid hormone in the blood stream and tissues. T3, the active form found within cells, cannot not used for thyroid testing since the levels fluctuate throughout the day and it is intracellular. T4 tends to be in the blood stream and is found either bound to a protein (called bound t4) or floating freely by itself (called free T4). Only free T4 can enter the cell to be converted to T3. The 2 tests for t4 levels are total t4 (ie the sum of bound and unbound t4) and free T4 (equilibrium dialysis). TT4 is thought to be a good screening test for hypothyroidism which is why it is found on alot Senior Wellness blood panels while free T4 is the better of the 2 tests however it is more expensive to run.

In greyhounds, T4 levels can be much lower than those for other breeds---up to 50%. Furthermore, there is a condition called "sick euthyroid syndrome" which can cause low T4 levels but is not due to hypothyroidism. Should your pet suffer from another disease, it can actually lower the amount of T4 in the bloodstream. Therefore, great caution must be used when trying to interpret T4 levels on their own.

TSH is the amount of the thyroid stimulating hormone produced by the pituitary gland. Most hypothyroid dogs will have elevated TSH levels as the cashier is trying to get the barista to make more coffee ie. thyroid hormone.

So when your veterinarian is trying to diagnose hypothyroidism, they really need 3 pieces of information in order to make a diagnosis---total T4, free T4 and TSH. All textbooks will say that hypothyroid dog will be considered hypothyroid if 2 out of the 3 blood tests are abnormal.

With greyhounds, it is important to remember that they have low T4 levels so it is important to examine the TSH levels and interpret the blood results in light of the clinical signs. As well, do not be "fooled" by some greyhound idiosyncrasies such as hair loss on the thighs (bald thigh syndrome) as it is frequently found in healthy greyhound with normal thyroid function.

The good news is that hypothyroidism is easily treated with a tasteless, small pill that is relatively inexpensive. Lifelong treatment is necessary and t4 levels should be monitored after 1 month of initial treatment and every 6 months thereafter.

Many owners report a big change in their dog's energy levels along with an improvement in coat quality and weight loss. It is a very rewarding disease to treat. Some owners even have jokingly asked to stop the medication as the find their dog's extra energy a little too much----sort of like their dog had a triple espresso.

Healthy Hound Treats – Carol Harkness

I hope this section becomes an opportunity for us to share ideas and recipes that our hounds will enjoy and benefit from. Dogs and humans alike appreciate and thrive on foods that are additive, pesticide and preservative free whenever possible. So please send in your discoveries to share.

Here are Cleo and Harry's top 2 favourites:

The Pumpkin Sundae

Place 1 heaping tbsp. of plain yogurt in their bowl. Top with a heaping tbsp. of canned pumpkin puree (not pie filling). Break a Milkbone in half and insert into pumpkin.

Both the yogurt and the pumpkin are good for their digestion.

Liver Treats

1 lb. liver

1 c. cornmeal

1 c. whole wheat flour

1 egg

1 tsp. garlic powder

Liquefy the liver. In bowl add the liver to the other ingredients. Place on a well oiled large cookie sheet and spread evenly. Bake at 350 F for 15 mins. Cut into 1" squares while warm. Divide into small batches. Keep one in fridge and freeze the rest.

These are great as training treats because they don't make crumbs that cause loss of concentration. You may want to cut or break them smaller for this purpose.



Cleo & Harry

Chilly Dogs - our Vendor Spotlight

Chilly Dogs is a "Function with Flare" dog coat designer and manufacturer company, located in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. Its high quality superior fitting outdoor dog jackets include Winter Coats, Rain Coats, Fleece Dog Sweaters, Terry Cloth Coats, Snoods and more. Chilly Dogs strives to fit most breeds from small Terriers to Great Danes, as well as specializing in fitting the unique body types of Greyhounds and Whippets.



Julie Kelly

Julie Kelly is the owner and designer of Chilly Dogs. She started the business in 2000 thanks to the help of her two hounds, Gigi, a Greyhound and Bismarck, a Weimaraner. After being frustrated with dog coats that were available at the time, particularly due to their lack of warmth for the cold Canadian winters, and poor fit, she decided to make Gigi and Bismarck coats that would be comparable to what she would wear on the ski slopes. The rest, as they say is history. Julie draws from her experience as an Architectural Technologist and an active outdoors person, to achieve the designs and overall appearance of Chilly Wear.

The company is dedicated to using only North American fleece and materials. It employs local sewers and pays them Canadian wages. Chilly Dogs is a 100% Canadian company, which also exports its products around the world.

For more information visit www.ChillyDogs.ca

Contact: Julie Kelly, Owner/Designer

Outdoor Gear for Active Dogs

20 Brodeur Cres.

Kanata, Ontario, Canada

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Tel # 613-270-0374

Fax #613-270-0724

Greyhound Walk & Talk

Interested in getting together with other greyhounds and their adopters?



In the Ottawa area we like to meet every Sunday in different green locations around the city. We get excited in the morning and don't leave our adopters alone until we're in the car and on our way; well, really, not until we get there!

We have great fun and our adopters seem to enjoy meeting each other, too.

We meet mostly during the year when there's no ice on the sidewalks 'cause our adopters have a hard time walking on ice and we certainly don't want them to get hurt. They're much too important to us! Who would take care of us; feed us, take us for walks, give us all those treats, scratch our ears and fuss over us!?

So once the ice and snow is gone and it gets a little warmer, emails go out to announce where we meet next. This winter has been toooo long. We're getting anxious to go for our walks again.

If you're interested in joining us, contact my "mom" and she'll add you to our group list.

*Hope to see you soon,
Katy*

Contact info:

Monica's email:

m.mcgrath7761@rogers.com

cell: 613-868-8390

home: 613-599-7761

Twistix - is this issues Product Review - Melanie Begin

As a greyhound owner, I am familiar with the struggle of trying to keep my hound's teeth clean, which is why I was drawn to test Twistix™. This is a dog treat that promised to remove plaque, tartar, and freshen my hound's breath. There is a large market for dental dog chews, with products ranging in size, shape, colour, flavour, and cost. I found the dental aisle overwhelming, but ultimately decided on Twistix™ for two reasons. Firstly, it is advertised as "wheat free", and upon checking the ingredients list I found that the treat is very simple and doesn't contain many additives, preservatives, or harmful colouring that may be prone to upsetting a hound's sensitive stomach. Secondly, the price is very reasonable. At \$4.99 for 5.5 OZ (approximately 7-8 treats), the treat is comparable in price to similar products. My hound seemed to really enjoy the treat (which lasted nearly 2 minutes). As for the fresh breath Twistix™ promised me, I can honestly say that I noticed a decrease in the "doggy odour" from his mouth directly after he consumed the treat.

Overall, I would recommend trying Twistix™ for your hound if you are looking for a moderately priced dental treat that will satisfy your dogs desire to chew with the added bonus of freshening his breath.

Myth Busters- Frank Shaffer

There are Myths about retired racers. We hear them during any "Meet & Greet" session or often from folks we meet when walking the dogs. The curious and the dog lovers find greys to be amazing – And so do we. . We realize it is necessary to provide clear and simple answers to questions posed honestly and innocently.

Myth: Greyhounds are so skinny. They must be sick or abused.

Truth: No, that's the way they come. It is a genetic consideration – they are athletes and like other athletes stay thin and fit even when their athletic endeavors are over. They are healthy and active. Greys have little fat and lots of muscle.

Upcoming Events - Mark Your Calendars.

March 22, 2009	Toe Nail Clinic	12:30 – 2:30
March 29, 2009	Coffee Social at WAG	10:30 – Noon
May 17, 2009	Coffee Social at WAG	10:30 – Noon
June 3 – 6, 2009	TLEGS and the Greyhound Supporters will be at the 2009 ACVIM Forum & Canadian Veterinary Medical Association Convention, Palais des congrès, Montréal, Québec (http://www.acvimforum.org/websites/forum/index.php?p=162)	
June 13, 2009	GRA Picnic – (visit GRA website at http://www.gracanada.com/ for updates)	

For more detailed information on upcoming events, please visit gsncr.ca.

The Gazette committee encourages readers to share this newsletter with dog lovers of all kinds.

The next edition of the Gazette is scheduled for June 1st. If you have any suggestions for articles or would like to submit one please send it to greyhoundgazette@gsncr.ca before May 1st.

Enjoy

Your Gazette team.