

FACT SHEET

Canine Chronic Ulcerative Stomatitis (CCUS) in Greyhounds

What is Canine Chronic Ulcerative Stomatitis (CCUS)?

Canine Chronic Ulcerative Stomatitis (CCUS), sometimes referred to as canine stomatitis, is a painful inflammatory disease affecting the soft tissues of a dog's mouth. It commonly causes ulceration and inflammation of the gums, cheeks, lips, and tongue. Greyhounds are one of the breeds reported to be predisposed to developing this condition.

CCUS is believed to occur when a dog's immune system overreacts to bacteria found in normal dental plaque. Even small amounts of plaque can trigger significant inflammation and painful ulcer formation. The exact cause remains unknown, but it is considered an immune-mediated condition rather than a simple dental disease.

A characteristic feature of CCUS is the presence of 'contact' or 'kissing' ulcers, which develop where the lips, cheeks or tongue touch the teeth. However, ulcers can occur throughout the mouth, including on the gums, palate, and tongue.

Signs and symptoms

Greyhounds affected by CCUS may show one or more of the following signs:

- Bad breath (halitosis)
- Red, inflamed or bleeding gums
- Ulcers or sores inside the mouth
- Excessive drooling or salivation
- Difficulty eating or preference for soft food
- Dropping food while eating
- Reduced appetite or weight loss
- Pawing at the mouth or rubbing the face
- Reluctance to chew toys or bones
- Behavioural changes due to chronic pain
- Thickened lips or swollen tissues around the mouth.

Because greyhounds can be stoic animals, signs of oral pain may be subtle and easily overlooked.



Diagnosis

A veterinarian will perform a thorough oral examination, often under anaesthesia, to assess the extent of the disease. Additional tests may include:

- Dental radiographs (x-rays)
- Blood tests
- Oral tissue biopsy
- Assessment of periodontal (dental) disease.

These investigations help rule out other causes of mouth ulcers, including autoimmune diseases, kidney disease, infections, and oral cancers.

Treatment

The main aim of treatment is to reduce plaque, control inflammation and relieve pain. This condition is generally considered to be manageable, but not curable, and will require lifelong management to ensure a good quality of life for affected dogs.

Dental treatment

- Professional dental examination and cleaning under general anaesthesia (COHAT – Complete Oral Health Assessment and Treatment)
- Removal of diseased teeth
- Extraction of teeth adjacent to persistent ulcers
- In severe cases, multiple or full-mouth extractions may be required.



Kissing ulcers develop where the lips, cheeks or tongue touch the teeth and are very painful requiring veterinary attention.

Home oral care

- Twice daily tooth brushing with a chlorhexidine gel (Mavlab Dental Spray Gel®) using an infant/baby toothbrush or a microfibre finger sock. The use of an enzymatic toothpaste such as Petsmile Toothpaste® is helpful in management of CCUS. Once daily brushing is not considered adequate to aid in management of this condition.
- Veterinary oral rinses or gels (for example, chlorhexidine products such as Mavlab Dental Spray Gel®)
- Regular veterinary dental assessments – a full COHAT under general anaesthesia every 6 months is recommended and necessary in these patients
- Ensure there are no kissing ulcers as ulceration is painful, whereas inflammation/gingivitis can be managed. Seek veterinary attention if ulceration is present.

Medications

Your veterinarian may prescribe:

- Pain relief medications
- Anti-inflammatory medications
- Antibiotics where secondary infection is present

Other medications to help manage inflammation in difficult cases.

Outlook

CCUS can be a chronic condition requiring long-term management. Early diagnosis and treatment can significantly improve comfort, quality of life and eating ability. Many dogs respond very well to dental treatment and ongoing plaque control, while others may require more extensive treatment, including tooth extractions.

When to seek veterinary advice

Arrange a veterinary examination if your greyhound shows:

- Persistent, bad breath
- Mouth pain
- Difficulty eating
- Drooling
- Visible ulcers or bleeding gums.

Early intervention can help prevent ongoing pain and improve your greyhound's wellbeing.