

GREYHOUNDS AND CORNS

Corns are a unique condition, rarely seen in breeds other than greyhounds. They are a common cause of lameness both when racing and into retirement.

Corns are found in the paw pads of greyhounds, usually appearing as a circular area on the base of the pad. At first, they can be quite small and may often be misidentified as foreign matter stuck to the paw pad. As the corn progresses, it will become larger, and the circle may be a different colour/texture to the rest of the pad. They are often feel hard to the touch and can be painful for your greyhound when pressure is applied.

Greyhounds with corns typically show signs of lameness that is worse or only occurs when walking over hard surfaces such as rocks, concrete or gravel. It is common for multiple corns to be present so, please check all four of your greyhound's feet if you are concerned.

The cause of corns can be due to a reaction caused by damage or trauma to the toe where the greyhounds body covers the area with scar tissue. Other research suggests it can be due to a viral infection similar to papilloma virus in humans.

If your greyhound appears to be lame, always check the surface of their paw pads. Although corns are a common cause of lameness, it is important to remember that they are not the only cause. Many other causes exist and could include muscle injuries, damage to the bones or ligaments or a variety of other foot problems. A thorough physical exam by your veterinarian is always recommended for lameness to ensure a correct diagnosis and appropriate treatment plan.



The most successful treatment option for corns is a surgical procedure called a superficial digital flexor tenotomy, or tenonectomy.

The flexor tendons run along the underside of the toe, attaching to the tendon just beyond the knuckle joint, and the deep tendon attaches to the nail tendon. When the tendon contracts it causes the toe to flex or curl. Once cut during the surgery, the toe no longer flexes and is lifted up due to the extensor tendon running along the top of the toe. This lifts the pad off the ground, resolving the lameness and allowing the corn to grow out once no longer traumatised.

While surgical treatment is the optimal treatment strategy for corns, temporary relief can be provided by the use of specifically designed boots to relieve the trauma and pressure being applied to the corns. However, these provide only temporary relief, and surgery should be considered as a long-term treatment for permanent pain relief. Due to greyhound's predisposition to developing corns, the boots are also a great way to try and prevent the development of corns.

