

TIPS FOR KEEPING YOUR GREYHOUND SAFE



Human Foods That Poison Pets—Beaware of foods and other products your greyhound might come into contact with around the house that might be harmful. Each of the following foods contain chemicals that rarely cause problems for humans, but for dogs these same chemicals can be deadly: Chocolate (especially semi-sweet and dark chocolate), Raisins and Grapes, Macadamia Nuts, Onions, Avocados, Xylitol (a sweetener found in sugar-free chewing gum and sometimes in peanut butter), Corn Cobs, Alcohol, Yeast Dough, Coffee and Tea Grounds, Cigarettes, Tobacco, Cigars, Chicken and Turkey Bones, Antifreeze.

Summer Heat and Heat Stroke—Greyhounds are very sensitive to extremes of heat and cold. They cannot be kept outdoors and should not be left in the backyard, on a patio or lanai during the heat of the day for more than a few minutes during the summer months. Trips to dog parks or exercise walks during the summer should be limited to the early morning or evening hours. Be aware of how hot pavement can get during the hot summer months. If the pavement is too hot for you to walk on, it is also too hot for your greyhound. Use of a “cool coat” during the summer is an excellent idea. (This is a jacket made of terry cloth, chamois, or similar material that can be dampened before placing it on your greyhound for his walk. At our outdoor summer events, we have a spray bottle of water handy so we can spritz the greyhounds periodically to keep them from becoming overheated. Pets can become dehydrated quickly on a hot day. Always have plenty of cool (but not icy) water available for them.

Many greyhounds love the water and enjoy a trip to a beach, dog waterpark or a chance to cool off in a wading pool. At the race tracks, the greyhounds are cooled off immediately after they race, so they are used to the water and enjoy it.

Never ever leave any pet in an automobile with the windows rolled up. Even if it is only 75 degrees outside, temperatures inside a closed automobile can quickly rise to 120 degrees or more.



Fireworks—Fireworks can be extremely upsetting for greyhounds and other pets. More dogs and cats escape from home on the 4th of July than any other holiday. Many communities have bans on fireworks in residential areas, but unfortunately they are often not enforced. Prior to the New Year's and 4th of July holidays when fireworks are the most prevalent, make it a point to speak with your neighbors and let them know that fireworks are extremely upsetting to your pets. Many times, people who do not have pets do not understand that fireworks can be a big problem for their neighbors with pets. Take your greyhound and other dogs out early before the fireworks begin for their exercise and potty walks. Do not leave your greyhounds or other pets outside in the yard alone even for a few minutes when fireworks are starting. Keep your pets inside during fireworks with windows closed. Many greyhounds and other pets will feel most comfortable in a room without large windows or in an interior room or closed in area like a walk-in closet or hallway.



Stormy Weather—Here in Florida, summertime is thunderstorm time. While some greyhounds pay no attention to thunderstorms, others are terrified. Whether they are frightened by the lightening, noise, or even the change in barometric pressure, storms may cause your pets to shake, howl, bark, and in extreme cases, to lose bladder and bowel control. You can help your greyhound by moving them to an interior room, hallway, or allowing them to get into a closet, similar to what you would do during fireworks. Playing soothing music will sometimes help if your greyhound is afraid of the noise. You might want to give your greyhound a favorite toy or favorite treats to take his mind off of the thunderstorm. Many, but not all dogs are helped by use of a ThunderShirt, which applies gentle, constant pressure, much like swaddling a baby.

Thunder Shirts are available at many pet stores or can be purchased on-line. There is a natural calming pet treat that we have used with some success. It is Composure by Vertiscience and is available in some pet stores or can be purchased on line (www.chewey.com). For those dogs that have an extreme anxiety to thunderstorms or fireworks, consult your veterinarian about a mild tranquilizer to use during those times.

Preventing your greyhound from getting loose--One of the most frightening experiences for any greyhound owner is for their greyhound to get out and become lost. Greyhounds are sight hounds and can see much further than we can, but they know nothing about traffic, and likely will not find their way home unassisted. You should use extreme caution to prevent your greyhound from getting loose. Here are some simple tips that every greyhound owner should know:

Keep a properly-fitting collar with identification tags on your greyhound at all times. We hear about people who take their greyhound's collar and tags off when inside the house. Please do not do this. All dogs should wear a collar with ID tags at all times. The collar does not need to be a martingale collar which is used for walking your greyhound. A simple, lightweight collar to hold the tags is sufficient. In the event that your greyhound escapes, the identification on the dog is the quickest and surest way for him to be returned to you safely. You should have an ID tag made with your current home and cell phone numbers. Do not rely solely on your county registration tag. These agencies are closed at night and on weekends and holidays—the most usual times that dogs go missing. If the sound of the tags bothers you, tape them together or put a rubber band around them. You can also order “tag bags” which are small leather pouches to hold the tags.

BAGA ID tags-- When you adopted your greyhound, you were provided with a BAGA identification tag which contains our telephone number and a number assigned to your greyhound. Please keep this tag on your greyhound's collar along with your other tags. If your greyhound gets out and the person who finds your dog cannot reach you, they can call us and we will take possession of your greyhound and get him safely back to you.

Transfer Your Greyhound's Registration—More than 90% of the greyhounds we place for adoption are registered with the National Greyhound Association in Abilene, Kansas. If your greyhound becomes lost and the person who finds your dog knows enough about greyhounds to check their ear tattoo numbers to find the owner, NGA will provide the name of the registered (racing) owner rather than you. Information is provided in your BAGA adoption packet on how to transfer your greyhound's ownership from the racing owner to you. We highly recommend that you transfer your greyhound's registration into your name as soon after adoption as possible. The transfer will cost \$30, but is well worth the price to insure that your greyhound has every chance to get

safely back to you in the event he or she becomes lost. Even if your greyhound was never registered to race, you can still register your greyhound as a pet with National Greyhound Association. For more information on this, please contact NGA at 785/263-4660 or nga@ngagreyhounds.com.

Microchips—Greyhounds adopted through BAGA have been microchipped prior to adoption. The paperwork you were given in your adoption packet will have the name of the microchip company as well as the microchip number. If you have not registered your greyhound's microchip number with the company that provided the microchip, please do so immediately. This is a simple procedure, usually something you can do right on-line. If you move or change your telephone number, remember to change this information with the microchip company. (If you have lost your greyhound's microchip number, please contact us. We have this information in our database of adopted greyhounds). If your greyhound has not been microchipped, we recommend that you contact your vet for this simple procedure that just takes a couple of minutes. The microchip is simply inserted under the skin between the shoulder blades. We have had several experiences where greyhounds that got loose were returned quickly to their owner through their microchips.

Keep your greyhound on a leash---A greyhound is definitely not the type of dog you can allow to follow you around outside unleashed. No matter how long you have had your greyhound, and no matter how well trained, a greyhound is first and foremost a sighthound. If a sighthound sees a small moving object in the distance, or if he becomes startled or frightened, his instinct is to run. Greyhounds can be at full speed in three strides. It goes without saying that you will never be fast enough to catch a running greyhound.



A greyhound can go from this-----to this in only a few seconds.

Hold the leash properly and securely—While holding or walking your greyhound, keep the leash around your wrist so it will not slide out of your hand in case your greyhound suddenly pulls or you are distracted. Greyhounds are so gentle and calm that we sometimes are not as careful as we should be about holding their leashes

securely. It only takes a second for your greyhound to become frightened and bolt. The last thing you want to happen is for your greyhound to get loose and run out into traffic, so please be careful to always hold your greyhound's leash securely.

Never Use A Retractable Leash--Retractable leashes offer you NO control over your dog and the 15'-20' cord can quickly become tangled around you or your dog, possibly causing severe injury. These types of leashes are not even safe for a small dog, let alone a dog the size of a greyhound.

Teach Your Greyhound Not to Bolt Out of the Door--- One of the first things you will want to teach your greyhound is not to bolt out of an open door. This is a simple exercise. Take your greyhound on a leash to an open door and have some treats with you. Stop at the door. If your greyhound stops with you, call his name and give him a treat. If he tries to go past you out the door, bring him back so he is standing beside you. Call his name again and give him a treat. Repeat this until your greyhound has learned to watch you for his treat when standing at an open door instead of bolting out the door. This same technique is also helpful in teaching dogs not to bolt out of car doors. Teaching your greyhound the "stay" command is also very helpful when you answer the door. Another excellent idea is to put a leash on him before answering the door.

Make Sure Your Fence and Gates are Secure—If you have a fenced yard, make sure your fence is secure. Check your fence regularly to insure that there are no places where your greyhound can escape. One of the main ways that your dog will get out is when a gate is inadvertently left open. Having a spring closure on the gate is a great way to make sure it is closed securely if someone enters your yard and forgets to close the gate. Along those lines, always check to make sure gates are closed prior to letting your greyhound out into the yard. Alert landscapers or other service workers that may need to get into your back yard that you have a greyhound and the gates need to be closed behind them. A sign on the gate is a good reminder to others to keep the gate closed. A variety of signs may be purchased on-line for this purpose. Shown below are some examples:



Keep Photos and Identifying Information on Your Greyhound Handy—In the event that your greyhound inadvertently gets out, photos are invaluable for identifying your greyhound to neighbors or to make “Lost Dog” signs. There is a photo of your greyhound on your adoption packet and on www.greyhound-data.com. We also recommend that you take a photo of your greyhound on each side, including any scars or identifying markings. Keep a listing of your greyhound’s ear tattoo numbers and microchip number handy. This information is in your adoption packet. Keeping your greyhound’s vet records handy will also be a big help in the event your greyhound gets injured and needs emergency vet care.

Traveling With Your Greyhound--Greyhounds usually love to travel with you and make great traveling companions, but a few safety precautions are necessary. When traveling with your greyhound, it is a good idea to have temporary identification on your greyhound’s collar, including your cell phone number and where you are staying. When we go to Sandy Paws or other greyhound gatherings, we place our name, hotel room number, and cell phone number on a ribbon around his neck. Always make sure you have a martingale collar and leash on your greyhound before you open the car door.

Tips for Special Holidays--A holiday that can leave your greyhound at risk is Halloween. Consider putting your greyhound behind a baby gate while you give out “Trick-or-Treat” goodies to neighborhood children. Putting your greyhound behind a baby gate when you have guests over is also a great idea to insure that your greyhound does not get out of an open door.

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR GREYHOUND GOES MISSING

Even if you have taken all precautions, it is still possible for your greyhound to get out and get lost. This can be a very frightening experience. Greyhounds can cover a lot of ground, especially if they are frightened, so your greyhound could be miles away in a relatively short period of time.

As soon as you know your greyhound is missing, call our BAGA phone line at 813/272-2332 and report your greyhound as lost, along with the location where your greyhound got out. We can quickly alert other adoption groups, who will contact us if one of their volunteers finds your dog, and we often have volunteers in your area that can assist with the search.

When searching for your greyhound, take your cell phone, an extra leash, doggie treats, bottled water, a water bowl, and if at night or late in the day, a flashlight. It is best to search using an automobile rather than try to chase after your dog on foot. Many

greyhounds love to ride in a car, van, or SUV. If you spot your greyhound, stop and open a car door and call your dog. He will be quite happy to see you and is likely to hop right in.

Many times, greyhounds will become frightened while lost and may not readily come to strangers. They will, however, usually come up to another dog, especially another greyhound. If you have another dog, take that dog on the search. We once were able to capture a greyhound who was so frightened that she was hiding in the woods and would not let anyone catch her, but she felt confident enough to come up to the greyhound we had taken with us on the search.

Enlist your family, friends, and neighbors to help search. Make sure they know to be quiet and calm. Running after a greyhound that is sighted will only make him more frightened and difficult to catch. Keep in mind that a lost dog will need water, so search around water sources such as lakes and streams.

If you do not find your greyhound within a few hours, contact the local animal shelters to see if your dog has been turned in. Post information about your lost greyhound along with a photo and the area where you need help searching on social media, including the BAGA Facebook pages. Many animal lovers will read the posting and you are likely to have help from complete strangers. Take a photo of your greyhound along with you to show to anyone you encounter while searching. Create a flyer to give out and place around the neighborhood where your greyhound got lost. Give a flyer to the mail man, newspaper delivery person, any workers you find in the area, give to the neighbors, post on utility poles, and place it in local businesses and vet's offices if possible. If someone finds your greyhound and there are no ID tags, they are likely to take your dog to a vet to see if there is a microchip. We recommend printing at least 40-50 flyers. (As soon as your greyhound is found, take the flyers down.)

We once had a flyer result in the recovery of a young greyhound who had been recently adopted. She got loose when her adopter allowed a neighbor (against what we had just told her) to use a retractable leash to walk the dog. The dog walker dropped the leash and the greyhound was gone in an instant, very frightened because the handle of the retractable leash was bouncing behind her. We searched diligently for 5 days with no luck. Finally, a nearby homeowner who had seen one of our flyers contacted us when the greyhound went into his garage looking for food and water. This story had a happy ending, but it was certainly a difficult few days for us as well as the lost dog, and could have had a very different outcome. Shown below is greyhound "Kissy", the dog that went missing. The photo on the left was the one we used on the Lost Greyhound flyer. The photo on the right is Kissy after rescue relaxing in her new home with her greyhound housemate, seemingly no worse for the experience. Kissy went on to live a long and happy life as a beloved pet.



If you still have not found your greyhound after a couple of days, do not give up. Periodically contact the local animal control agency to see if your dog has been turned in. While many agencies are helpful and will notify you if a dog matching your greyhound's description has been turned in, some agencies require that you check with them rather than relying on them to contact you. We once had a lost greyhound and the agency in our area would not tell us by phone if any greyhound had been turned in. Fortunately, we had a volunteer who was willing to go and check frequently.

As you can see from our experiences with lost greyhounds, prevention is much easier for you and your greyhound than the search process, so please follow the tips above to always keep your greyhound as safe as possible.



