Persistent Urinary Tract Infections in Female Greyhounds

Does your female Greyhound experience the following signs repeatedly?

- Irritation and inflammation of the skin that surrounds the vulva (perivulvar dermatitis).
- Frequent urination (pollakiuria).
- Urinary incontinence.
- Licking or other signs of irritation around the vulva.
- Chronic urinary tract infection (UTI).
- Vaginitis with or without discharge.
- Vulvar hyperpigmentation (darkening of the skin).

If you answer Yes to 2 or more, she might have a combination of vulvar hypoplasia (underdevelopment) and/or recessed vulva, also called tucked vulva.

What is it, and what causes recessed vulva?

Greyhounds are elite athletes, everyone has seen their unbelievably large hindlimb muscles; Unfortunately what makes them effective sprinters, could also sometimes get them in trouble. If you look at female Greyhounds from behind, you will notice that sometimes it is very difficult to see their vulvas. Either because their hindlimb muscles are compressing it, because there is an excessive amount of skin covering it, or both. Some racing females also have clitoral hypertrophy (enlargement of the clitoris), due to the drugs used to suppress heat cycles.

Constant compression and friction of the vulva in combination with excessive vulvar skin, causes retention of urine and secretions. This predispose the area to irritation, bacterial growth, infection and inflammation.
What is the treatment for recessed vulva?

Regular cleaning of the affected area, topical application of antibacterial ointment to control dermatitis and/or systemic medications for urinary incontinence are helpful; However the most successful and definitive treatment is the removal of excess tissue, a procedure called vulvoplasty, vaginoplasty or episioplasty.

This surgery not only helps to eliminate the primary cause of the signs, which is the excessive skin that covers the vulva; also helps with the secondary signs such as licking, secretion, etc.

Usually the recovery time is very short; Analgesics and antibiotics might be prescribed, and since the patients are likely to lick the area, a racing muzzle must be kept until the stiches are removed.

The potential complications of the surgery are would dehiscense (incision braking open), due to removal of too much skin. Formation of seroma, and swelling are other potential complications; however some post-operative swelling is normal.

The prognosis of the surgery is excellent, and it is the best option to treat persistent urinary tract infections in female Greyhounds, after other causes are discarted.
### Greyhound Health and Wellness Program

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Columbus, Ohio 43210

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**WE DEPEND ON YOUR GENEROSITY!!**

“Our mission of helping the Greyhounds is supported by your kindness”.

To make a donation to the Greyhound Health and Wellness Program please use the link below to the secure website for online giving [https://greyhound.osu.edu/giving/](https://greyhound.osu.edu/giving/) or contact Dr. Guillermo Couto (couto.1@osu.edu) or Karen Longbrake (longbrate.1@osu.edu).

We thank you very much for your generous support so that we may continue our mission to help the Greyhounds.

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**For further information or to register, please see our website at**

[https://vetmedce.osu.edu/ceactivities/conferences/index.cfm?action=coursesview&eventId=39171](https://vetmedce.osu.edu/ceactivities/conferences/index.cfm?action=coursesview&eventId=39171) or contact:

**Office of Veterinary Continuing Education**

- Phone: (614) 292-8727
- Email: vetmedce@osu.edu

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**SAVE THE DATE FOR THE 2011 GREYHOUND PROGRAM CONFERENCE**

**GREYHOUND QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER**

**ISSUE 11, AUTUMN 2010**

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### Calendar

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