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Special Information for Greyhounds

Are greyhounds more likely to suffer bleeding or bruising after surgery?

Three research papers have shown that up to a quarter of greyhounds can suffer from increased bleeding or bruising after surgical procedures. The research was carried out in retired racing greyhounds undergoing neutering or limb amputations, but it is very likely that the problem affects all greyhounds and all surgical procedures (including dental extractions).

What causes this problem?

The problem is known as “fibrinolytic syndrome”. It occurs when the body forms a clot as normal, but other chemicals in the bloodstream dissolve the clot too early, so that bleeding starts again. For this reason, bleeding often seems controlled at the time of the surgery or the dental extraction, but then bruising or bleeding develops over the next couple of days. We assume that affected greyhounds inherit this unbalanced clotting system.

How do I know if my greyhound will be affected?

Unfortunately, there is no blood or genetic test to find out in advance whether your greyhound will suffer from this problem. All of the standard blood clotting tests come back normal in these greyhounds, so are no use in this situation.

Treatment

It appears that giving anti-fibrinolytic medication can reduce the risk of these complications. For this reason, we are now offering greyhounds a course of an anti-fibrinolytic agent known as Tranexamic Acid, at the time of any surgical or dental procedure. This medication stops blood clots from breaking down too soon. The medication is given as a tablet every 8 hours for 5 days, starting the evening after surgery has been performed. Currently we are able to offer this course of medication for £19.

References

Marin, L.M., et al., Epsilon aminocaproic acid for the prevention of delayed postoperative bleeding in retired racing greyhounds undergoing gonadectomy. *Vet Surg*, 2012 41(5):p 594-603

Lara-Garcia, A., et al., Postoperative bleeding in retired racing greyhounds. *J Vet Intern Med*, 2008 2(3):p 525-33

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Marin, L.M., et al., Retrospective evaluation of the effectiveness of epsilon aminocaproic acid for the prevention of postamputation bleeding in retired racing Greyhounds with appendicular bone tumours: 46 cases (2003-2008). J Vet Emerg Critical Care (San Antonio), 2012 22(3):p 332-40

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