

DEALING WITH INJURIES



Greyhounds (c.1500) Gaston Phoebus, Book of the Hunt Pierpont Morgan Library M.1044, f.37v

Suzanne Stack, DVM

Presented here are some of Dr. Stack's recommendations for healing those wounds that don't require a visit to the veterinarian but leave us scratching our heads about how to deal with them.

HYDROTHERAPY: I couldn't agree more with the people who have posted about the healing powers of plain old water. For any of the really banged up greyhounds, particularly those with a lot of bruising/bleeding under the skin or wounds that aren't going to or can't be sewed, hosing down the wounds for 5 minutes twice a day works wonders. We're lucky enough to have the weather here in Arizona where this is pretty much possible year round. Stitches With bruising and/or edema, drains, open wounds - I hose them all. With large areas that can't be bandaged, this is usually the best solution. Often you can keep the open area covered with a size large t-shirt so the greyhound leaves it alone.

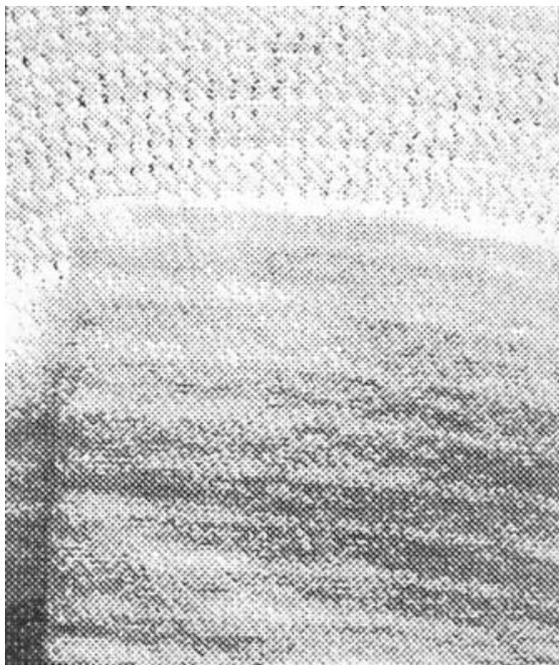
I've also stumbled upon the perfect leg bandage for greyhounds which avoids the problem of tearing up the dog's skin by ripping off tape over and over to change bandages.

NICH: We buy rolls of NICH. It's a stockinette-like (tubelike) bandage, comes in several sizes. From small enough to fit over a leg to large enough to fit around a neck (before NICH bandage, I always used tube tops to cover neck wounds, very stylish).

As the name stockinette implies, NICH is like a sock with both ends open. You simply cut a tube-shaped piece to the length you need. Pull it up over the leg and tape it to the skin at the top only. This keeps your greyhound from licking the wound/stitches. It also gives you access to the wound to apply a topical by lifting up the NICH bandage.

The real beauty is that when it's time to change the bandage, you leave the tape taped to the leg and just cut the NICH off. Apply a new; piece of NICH by taping it on right over the old tape. Thus you can keep a leg bandaged for weeks and only have to rip the tape off once, at the end of treatment. Mineral oil will help tape come off without irritating the skin so much.

NICH is superior to regular stockinette because it's clingy and has "breathing holes" so the wound gets air. Butler (veterinary distributor) carries it in our area.



NICH shown stretched & unstretched

NEOPREDEF: I like Neopredef powder because it dries out the wound and contains a topical anesthetic so dogs tend to leave it alone. Don't want to use anything sticky topically or it gets the NICH gunky in short order.

ADAPTIC: (Johnson & Johnson) pads as the first layer of the bandage on the raw area will promote skin growth. Your vet can order these or you can get them through a small private pharmacy, like the one near the hospital that everyone goes to to fill their prescriptions.

NEXCARE WATERPROOF BANDAIDS: Another tidbit... I had long ago discovered that Nexcare Waterproof bandaids (used to be CleanSeals) stick to torn greyhound ears. Well, they also stick to greyhound legs. So, for those little cuts that you don't want your greyhound licking at but are too small to go to the bother of bandaging, just use Nexcare Waterproof bandaids.

FACILITATOR: (Liquid Bandage by Blue Ridge Pharmaceuticals) applied every 1-4 days (when bandage is changed) speeds the healing of wounds that must granulate in on their own. Apply Facilitator, then let dry for 10 minutes before bandaging.

BANDAGING A FOOT: I'm not going to attempt to go into a long diatribe here about how to bandage a foot. Just wanted to remind you to be sure to put cotton between the toes and in the sulcus (groove) underneath the foot around the main pad. If you forget to do this in a greyhound, when you remove your bandage, you're likely to find a nasty interdigital skin infection.