



# IRISH WOLFHOUND HEALTH GROUP

## INTRODUCTION TO YOUR NEW IRISH WOLFHOUND

Congratulations on your new addition! The information on the following pages is designed to help you whether you have a puppy or an older hound joining your family. The aim is to help settle your hound in and to end up with a healthy well socialised member of your family.



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[WWW.IWHEALTHGROUP.CO.UK](http://WWW.IWHEALTHGROUP.CO.UK)

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## First things first – before you bring a puppy home.

Before you get puppy home, you must ensure you have provided a quiet, cosy rest area, preferably in a corner, where puppy can feel safe and away from the noise and activity of domestic life. A room with access to an outside space will aid housetraining. An open top puppy pen is ideal, as the puppy's access to all areas of the room can be safely curtailed for a short period if necessary. If one area of the pen is covered by a blanket, a cosy 'den like' area, free from drafts, will be created. A soft bed, a few toys and a bowl of water should be available. When your puppy or older hound retreats to this area, he must be left to rest undisturbed.

It is important that consideration is given to which areas of the house are to be made available to your new family member. In fairness to the puppy, decisions regarding access to sofas, beds etc. must be adhered to by all family members. The puppy will quickly determine the boundaries and which areas around the home are out of bounds. For ease of training and safety reasons, it is advisable to restrict the puppy's movements to just one or two rooms and outside space, initially. It is advisable to use a stairgate, to keep the puppy away from stairs.

Flooring is given its own separate mention here as it conveys such importance to the safety and wellbeing of hounds young and old. Hard floors are slippery for dogs and can cause unnecessary injury to the elderly and skeletal problems for the young hound. They must be given some traction using carpet or non-slip rugs. Rubber backed runners and mats are ideal as they can be lifted and washed as they become soiled. Hard floors can also contribute to the development of 'Bursas' (more on this as you read on).

Puppies, like young children are naturally inquisitive and oblivious to danger, so please ensure all washing liquids and similar chemicals, live wires, inappropriate foods etc. along with any precious items displayed about the home, are kept well out of reach. The responsibility lies with you, not the dog.

When a puppy is collected, it will typically be between 10 – 12 weeks old. The puppy pack provided by the breeder should include a detailed diet sheet and notes on when the pups have been wormed, vaccinated, and microchipped together with KC registration. Be aware that the breeder may have added not for breeding endorsements, this information should be in any contract of sale the breeder has in place. Your puppy's breeder should arrange for the puppy to be insured for four weeks from purchase. Please ask your breeder about this if it is not offered.

A good breeder will be a source of support and knowledge all through the life of your hound.

## Ongoing Insurance

Breeders can apply to various insurers for free cover for their puppies going to new homes. Fourteen days before this is due to expire, you need to sort out your own insurance cover. The best cover is lifetime cover. It is also worth checking which companies your vet practice will claim directly from and what the excess is on the policy. TIP: if your puppy suffers illness/accident in the period of free insurance and is receiving treatment – considering continuing with that policy, if you change insurance previous conditions will be excluded.

## Feeding

This is going to vary between breeders, but your breeder should provide advice on feeding, you will need to gradually increase your puppy's food but **DO NOT LET HIM GET FAT**. In a fast-growing breed keeping lean will aid bone growth to be a slow steady growth. A good indication of body condition on your puppy is that you can **FEEL** his ribs but not **SEE** them. You should not see any nobbles along his spine. Knuckles on the front legs can appear huge, this is normal and indicates how much growth is to come. His toilet should be firm but don't worry if when you first get him, he is loose as this can be anxiety based, but if it continues, have a look at amounts being fed, milk, treats etc. as you may have to adapt this. **DO NOT SUPPLEMENT** your puppy with calcium, a complete diet is exactly that, and raw diet will have sufficient in the meat and bone.

Your puppy will likely come to you on 4 meals a day. By 6 months you are likely to be on 3 meals a day, and later 2 meals a day for his lifetime.

Welcoming a giant breed puppy or dog into your home is a responsibility to be considered very carefully. The flooring around your home, space, stairs, access to a garden or outside area, can determine the adult health, soundness and temperament of your hound and the ultimate demands on your wallet. A large dog brings large adjustments to your lifestyle - a bigger vehicle is just one example. Big dog - big food bills and considerably bigger than average veterinary fees.

## Training

Toilet training takes time. It is crucial to take your puppy outside when it needs to go. Take your puppy outside after eating, drinking, playing or when it wakes from sleep. Keep an eye out for any signs your puppy may be looking for a place to "go". With mistakes indoors quietly clean up any accidents with an enzyme cleaner and praise any successes.

It is worth thinking about what behaviour you do and don't want from an adult hound whilst you still have a young pup. What will be your house rules? Dogs allowed on furniture or not? Where will you feed? What will your dog do when you are eating? It is easier to decide on a rule and stick to it than suddenly decide to stop feeding your hound bits of what you are eating because you are fed up with not being allowed to eat in peace!

Wolfhounds respond well to reward. Harsh training methods have no place with such a sensitive soul. Praise and treats are a useful way to encourage your hound to behave how you want them to. If you need support with training, then a good breeder should also be someone you can turn to for advice.

## Safety

A wolfhound who is left alone for long periods of time (and puppies left at all) will tend to make their own entertainment! It is important that hounds are not left alone longer than they are happy with and that they have a safe space to be left in.

Rope type toys can be dangerous to giant hounds as they can easily chew through them and ingest some of the rope, resulting in serious need for surgery. A stuffed Kong can keep a puppy busy safely. Freeze it to keep your puppy amused for longer! Don't allow games which encourage your puppy to jump up. This could end up being dangerous for you and them too.

Avoid allowing your hound to dash to the front door when someone calls, teach them to wait while you go through any doors before them, it's a useful command. The last thing you want is to have your hound escape from your property or startle a caller. It is also important to teach a safe way to go through a gate or doorway. This could prevent injury to both you and your hound.

## Children and hounds

All puppies mouth. They also have needle sharp teeth, and it hurts! Always offer something you are happy for them to chew and supervise carefully around children.

Never allow children to play rough with your hound. This could end up with injuries all round. Children shouldn't be allowed to climb over your hound or 'ride' them or disturb them whilst eating or sleeping. Never let your hound be walked by a child. It is vital that they are always with an adult who would know how to behave in an emergency.

The safety and wellbeing of both your hound and who they encounter is down to you. Consistent, thoughtful, and kind training will ensure you have a happy hound and one whose behaviour you can be proud of.

## Bedding

Vet fleece is very useful for young puppies. It washes well and is generally not seen as edible or shreddable! Older dogs need a single bed sized flat mattress type bed.

A dog's bed should be a safe and comfortable area. Children should be taught never to bother a sleeping hound. And a puppy shouldn't be allowed to bother older dogs who are trying to rest.

## Exercise

Great care should be taken with a new puppy. Before they are fully vaccinated, pups can be taken out in the car to see new things and watch the world go by. Once vaccinated, puppies can be allowed to experience more of the world. This does NOT mean going on long walks. Puppies can be allowed supervised freedom in your garden or safe area.

Do not let them rough play with your other dogs as this can lead to injury. Outside on the lead good rule to follow is daily lead exercise no more than 5 minutes per month of life. Going out and about can mean simply driving somewhere new, having a little sniff, and sitting back and observing all the new things.

If your puppy is nervous of anything, then never try and force them to confront that fear. Let them watch from a distance until they decide the new scary thing isn't so scary at all! Stay calm and unruffled! The first 20 weeks of a puppy's life are the most important regarding socialisation. The more positive and varied experiences you can gradually give your puppy in this time the better.

Exercise and general activity must be monitored closely in the first few months. Care should be taken until about a year.

Puppies should not be allowed to rough and tumble play with people or bounce around with other, larger dogs. They need to be supervised at play and it is essential they get enough rest. *TIP: As your pup grows, take notice of the lumpy knuckles on the front legs, as those lumps flatten and disappear, it's a good indicator the growth plates have closed.*

An older dog will need a daily gallop in a safe place. Fitness is something that should be built up gradually and then maintained. Always remember that a wolfhound is a hunting hound and more than capable of killing sheep, deer, rabbits, squirrels. It is vital to train recall and to reward your hound for coming back – do remember though this

is a sighthound so once chasing – they may well not return until they’ve given up pursuit. Consider using a whistle – if you combine this in training when you you’re your puppy, and with treats so they know coming back to you will lead to a nice reward.

Loose lead training is a must. NEVER use a harsh choke on your hound. A well-made half choke is safe and secure. Treats and rewards will be necessary at first. You need to ensure that both you and your hound are safe when out walking. If necessary, a dogmatic or K9 bridle can be a useful tool.

## Grooming

Ensure that you groom your puppy at least weekly. Get them used to having their feet, ears and face groomed handled, plus around their private parts, so they don’t object to this when they are older. After about 6 months the shaggy puppy coat will start to come out and you can start to hand strip. This will allow the coarser adult coat to grow in. There is an excellent grooming page on Facebook at this link [www.facebook.com/groups/234265797388620](http://www.facebook.com/groups/234265797388620)

## Puppy Dentition – a note on how this grows.

Due to their size, Irish Wolfhound puppies grow rapidly during their first 6 - 12 months of life. This means that their teeth often change position in their mouths. It may seem alarming to see one or both pointed canine teeth in the bottom jaw going either into the gum line or just inside near the pallet. DO NOT BE ALARMED. Until you see soreness or bleeding in the puppy's mouth, you don't need to intervene. Otherwise, wait and be patient because even if the teeth don't align perfectly, in most cases the dog's mouth will accommodate the teeth and won't cause any problems. If you are in any doubt, please go back to your breeder or contact the IWHG for advice and support.



*Showing common growth phase of canine teeth*



*Showing normal teeth position*

## Health Information

### **Heart disease**

Irish wolfhounds are susceptible to heart conditions, primarily Atrial Fibrillation or Dilated Cardiomyopathy. There is a screening service run through the Irish Wolfhound

Health Group where any owner can attend and get a low-priced annual MOT on their hound to pick up any issues early.

### **Pneumonia**

Pneumonia is also an emergency. You MUST seek veterinary intervention ASAP. The health group has a pneumonia protocol that is kept up to date. It is recommended that you keep a copy of this to hand. Some vets are not experienced with wolfhounds or pneumonia and the right treatment (got quickly) could save your dog's life. All owners should be aware of the signs of potential pneumonia:

HAVE A LOOK AT THE HEALTH GROUP PAGE WITH VIDEOS TO SEE WHAT SYMPTOMS LOOK LIKE [www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/pneumonia.html](http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/pneumonia.html)

- Sudden onset difficulties in breathing
- Head lowered and stretched forwards.
- Dog reluctant or unable to lie on its side.
- Dog may or may not be coughing.
- Temperature may be very high (but a normal temperature doesn't preclude a diagnosis of pneumonia)
- Lungs may appear clear on x ray.
- If pneumonia is suspected, then fast intervention is VITAL. Unfortunately, a dog that has had pneumonia is more likely to get it again.

### **Bloat/Gastric Torsion**

Wolfhounds are deep chested giant dogs and can be susceptible to bloat (Gastric Dilation Volvulus). This is when the dog's stomach inflates with gas and fluid. The stomach rotates and cuts off the blood supply. THIS IS AN EMERGENCY. You must get your dog to a vet ASAP. The first signs can include:

- Swelling of the abdomen (particularly on the left side.)
- Tender abdomen
- Abdomen sound like a drum when tapped.
- Vomiting foam but no food
- Anxiety or salivating or whining for no apparent reason.
- Dark red gums (pale in late stages)
- Restlessness and pacing
- Standing with head down
- Lack of normal gurgling sounds from stomach

Bloat can be caused by rapid eating, genetic predisposition, exercising too soon before or after a meal, stress or drinking a very large amount of water very quickly.

To help to avoid bloat:



- Don't feed straight after exercising.
- Split food into two meals
- Don't let dog gulp huge amounts of water.
- Soak dried food before feeding.
- Using a slow feeder bowl if you have a dog who gulps their food.

### **Anaesthetics**

Anaesthetics are to be avoided whenever possible. As their bodyweight is mostly muscle and bone, wolfhounds require much less anaesthetic than a dog who weight is made up of much more body fat. It is worth seeking the advice of your breeder if you need to anaesthetise your hound for any reason.

### **Bursas – (Hygromas)**

Bursas are fluid filled swellings around joints, most commonly on the elbow. They are common in young hounds, these fluid filled sacs develop around the joints, normally the elbow, as the body tries to cushion the area.. Rough play or crashing down onto hard surfaces can make them more likely. – Notorious for appearing overnight and taking months to disappear, Bursas generally do NOT require any veterinary attention. The only exception to this is if they become infected. In that case antibiotics normally resolve the issue. Removing them or draining them is to be avoided. Speak to your breeder if you are concerned.



### **Neutering or spaying.**

Wolfhound males are not generally oversexed, so it isn't common to need to neuter them. People do often opt to spay bitches, and this can be for future health reasons such as avoiding pyometra. HOWEVER, IT IS CRITICAL THIS IS NOT DONE TOO EARLY. 2.5 YEARS IS THE MINIMUM AGE YOU SHOULD BE CONSIDERING THIS KIND OF INTERVENTION. Please see the guide at the end of this brochure Neutering Facts.

### **Tails**

A word on tails, Wolfhounds have long tails that have a wide wag span, this can lead to injury at the tail end if it hits walls or furniture – do be aware of this.



### **Consider the Future**

While we hope this never happens – please do make provision for your hound in the event of death/illness or accident. Make sure someone in your friends or family

know who to contact to deal with the re-homing of your hound. Writing this into your Will is one way of ensuring your instructions are carried out.

## BREED HEALTH AND INFORMATION GUIDES

Download these to your computer or phone using the QR codes or access directly from the Health Group Website.

	Guide to Buying a Puppy	<a href="https://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/files/GUIDE-puppy.pdf">https://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/files/GUIDE-puppy.pdf</a>
	Introducing your new Irish Wolfhound	<a href="https://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/files/GUIDE-iwbreed.pdf">https://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/files/GUIDE-iwbreed.pdf</a>
	Heart Disease	<a href="https://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/files/GUIDE-heart.pdf">https://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/files/GUIDE-heart.pdf</a>
	Pneumonia for Owners	<a href="https://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/files/GUIDE-pneumonia_nek4j47j.pdf">https://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/files/GUIDE-pneumonia_nek4j47j.pdf</a>
	Pneumonia for Vets	<a href="https://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/files/GUIDE-pneumonia-vets.pdf">https://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/files/GUIDE-pneumonia-vets.pdf</a>
	Neutering facts	<a href="https://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/files/GUIDE-neutering.pdf">https://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/files/GUIDE-neutering.pdf</a>
	Anaesthesia Information	<a href="https://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/files/GUIDE-anaesthesia.pdf">https://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/files/GUIDE-anaesthesia.pdf</a>
	Bloat	<a href="https://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/files/GUIDE-bloat.pdf">https://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/files/GUIDE-bloat.pdf</a>
	Dentition – how this develops in the Irish Wolfhound – Information for Owners	<a href="https://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/files/GUIDE-dentition.pdf">https://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/files/GUIDE-dentition.pdf</a>
	Dentition – Information for Vets	<a href="https://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/files/GUIDE-dentition-vets.pdf">https://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/files/GUIDE-dentition-vets.pdf</a>
	Heart Screening Dates and Locations	<a href="https://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/dates-and-locations-.html">https://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/dates-and-locations-.html</a>

## OTHER INFORMATION

Support your breed by joining one of the breed clubs.

Irish Wolfhound Club – [www.irishwolfhoundclub.org.uk](http://www.irishwolfhoundclub.org.uk)

Irish Wolfhound Society – [www.irishwolfhoundsociety.com](http://www.irishwolfhoundsociety.com)

Irish Wolfhound Club of Scotland – [www.irishwolfhoundclubofscotland.co.uk](http://www.irishwolfhoundclubofscotland.co.uk)

Irish Wolfhound Club of Northern Ireland - [www.iwcni.co.uk](http://www.iwcni.co.uk)

### Irish Wolfhound Rescue Trust

If at any time in the future your circumstances change and you need to re-home your Irish Wolfhound, contact the breeder or if that isn't possible contact the Rescue Trust for assistance.

[www.irishwolfhoundrescuetrust.co.uk](http://www.irishwolfhoundrescuetrust.co.uk)

### Practical Aid for Wolfhounds

We aim to help Wolfhounds and their owners' overcome difficulties, by providing a "one stop" service for advice, hands-on help, and practical support.

[www.pawstrust.co.uk](http://www.pawstrust.co.uk)

Find these groups on Facebook.

Irish Wolfhound Health Group.

The Original Irish Wolfhound Community

The Irish Wolfhound Club News Page

The Irish Wolfhound Society News Page

Irish Wolfhound Club of Scotland

Irish Wolfhound Club of Northern Ireland