



Greys Matter

BALD THIGH SYNDROME

What is bald thigh syndrome?

Bald thigh syndrome is a form of pattern baldness. It's not just men who lose their follicles as they age, certain breeds of dogs are also suffer from hair thinning/loss. The breeds affected are: Dachshunds, Water Spaniels, Boston terriers, Chihuahuas, Mini pins and all sight hounds.

We don't know the exact reason for pattern baldness. Because it occurs in certain breeds (and each of the breeds tends to have a different pattern), there is probably a genetic cause. We do know that it's not due to inflammation or infection. It's also not due to hormones, despite the fact that it usually starts around puberty (6–9 months of age) and that there are hormonal causes of baldness.

Greys with bald thigh syndrome are not ill. Their skin is normal. It's just the fur on the thighs that changes – basically the hairs become much shorter and finer and have smaller hair bulbs.

What are the symptoms bald thigh syndrome?

This one's pretty self explanatory – bald thighs!

The hair loss is typically identical on each thigh (which is called symmetrical alopecia). The hair starts thinning during late puberty and progresses with age. Sometimes the hair grows back a bit after dogs retire from racing.

There are no other symptoms – it's not itchy, red or painful. Over time, without the protection from fur, the skin can become darker (hyperpigmented).

How is bald thigh syndrome treated?

Because there are other diseases that can cause hair loss, if your Grey is showing any other symptoms, it might be necessary to do some testing before talking about treatment. Testing could include measuring thyroid, cortisol and sex hormone levels as well as skin testing for mites, bacteria and fungus.

Bald thigh syndrome is a cosmetic problem. Treatment isn't needed to improve health, lifespan or quality of life. Treatment is to improve appearance, so it's very much optional rather than recommended. Some dogs will respond to melatonin (3–9 mg three times a day). No all melatonin products are created equal – the stuff you can buy over the counter tends to vary in potency. You need to treat for at least 6–12 weeks before you can see whether the melatonin is working.