



# PNEUMONIA IN THE IRISH WOLFHOUND

## Essential Information for Owner

**Pneumonia in an Irish Wolfhound is a severe and rapidly life-threatening condition which must be treated urgently.**

It has been recognized for decades amongst owners of Irish Wolfhounds (IWH) that they are susceptible to respiratory problems in particular pneumonia. Pneumonia in IWH may not present with typical symptoms such as a cough and in many cases the condition is fatal because it is not recognized in time to treat it effectively. Another problem facing IWH is that currently the most appropriate treatment for the condition remains unclear. A further concern is that IWH are a minority breed and therefore many vets won't have come across the condition as they don't see IWH very often.

It is crucial that IWH owners and their vets are aware of this condition, particularly the importance of rapid treatment. The IWHG have compiled this information sheet using information that has been gathered from clinical details and outcomes of the cases that we are aware of and is in addition informed by the IWHG's ongoing study of bronchopneumonia.

We hope in having compiled these notes we can help improve the outcome of IWH with bronchopneumonia. We hope that you will find the details in the document helpful. We would also value your assistance in helping gather information for the study into bronchopneumonia being carried out by Angela Bodey BSc, BVSc, PhD, MRCVS and Mark Dunning MA VetMB PhD, CertSAM, DipECVIM-CA, MRCVS.

Drs Bodey and Dunning are working with the IWHG collecting case studies and analysing the data. The aim is to identify significant factors that influence the development and outcome of this condition and if possible, the most appropriate treatment. For further information about the project or to provide clinical details of a case of bronchopneumonia please check our webpage <https://iwhealthgroup.com/health/a-z-of-health-information/pneumonia/>

If you have any questions please contact Miranda Brace via email: [mirandabraehead@gmail.com](mailto:mirandabraehead@gmail.com); your help would be much appreciated.



This is the typical stance of an Irish Wolfhound with pneumonia, with the head and neck stretched forward. The eyes are preoccupied and dull, she is reluctant to lie down and if she does is unable to lie on her side. The photograph was taken as soon as the dog became ill. Her owner, who knew the signs of pneumonia, said "When the photo was taken she had difficulty breathing, couldn't lie down, and had a temperature of 40.2 degrees C".

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| Recognising Pneumonia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sudden onset.</li> <li>• Difficulties in breathing.</li> <li>• Head lowered and stretched forward level with the back, neck extended to expand the airway as much as possible.</li> <li>• Reluctant or unable to lie on its side.</li> <li>• May or may not be coughing.</li> <li>• Temperature may be very high – but a normal temperature does not necessarily preclude a diagnosis of pneumonia.</li> <li>• Lungs may appear clear on X-ray</li> <li>• There have been cases of pneumonia in Wolfhounds following a lungworm infection. (Lungworm is no longer restricted to the south of England and is present in most areas)</li> </ul>   |
| Treating Pneumonia    | <p><b>URGENTLY.</b></p> <p><b>If there is any doubt, treat with antibiotics first and argue later !</b></p> <p><b>Do not take a ‘want and see’ attitude.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most vets will want to administer a combination of antibiotics intravenously as it is important to hit it hard and fast.</li> <li>• Fluids intravenously should be considered – but care taken if your Wolfhound has a heart condition.</li> <li>• <b>Drug treatment needs to continue for 4 – 6 weeks.</b></li> <li>• <b>Anti-inflammatory drugs may also be of value, particularly if temperature is high.</b></li> <li>• Steam and coupage can assist in moving congestion from the lungs.</li> <li>• If your Wolfhound has had pneumonia, it is more likely to have it again.</li> </ul> |
| Critical Timing       | <p>If response to treatment is not seen within 24 hours, we would encourage your vet to speak to a specialist as time is always of the essence with this condition.</p> <p>A long course of treatment for 4 – 6 weeks would be advised as the condition is often recurrent, and any recurrence may be reduced if an appropriate duration antibiotic course is used.</p>  |
| Vet Aware             | <p>Speak to your vet – ensure they are aware that Irish Wolfhounds are susceptible to pneumonia and present with atypical symptoms. Give them a copy of the Guidelines for Vets and ask that they read it and keep it on your dog’s file.</p>  |
| Advice                | <p>If you are worried about pneumonia and wish to speak with an experienced owner please contact <a href="mailto:mirandabraehead@gmail.com">mirandabraehead@gmail.com</a> or <a href="mailto:jean.timmins2016@gmail.com">jean.timmins2016@gmail.com</a></p>  |
| Survey                | <p>The Health Group is collecting any case studies where hounds have had pneumonia to build the case for critical and urgent treatment, and recognition of the atypical symptoms this breed has. You can help by completing the survey at <a href="https://forms.gle/1TGsVT49xotjanCA7">https://forms.gle/1TGsVT49xotjanCA7</a></p>  |
| Video                 | <p>Access a video of a hound with pneumonia and see the signs to watch out for <a href="https://www.youtube.com/shorts/EDmk_sMMGwl">https://www.youtube.com/shorts/EDmk_sMMGwl</a></p>   |