



## The Irish Wolfhound Health Group

### Dentition Study

The IWHG recently commenced a study into the development of teeth and jaw alignment in Irish Wolfhound puppies. This study has the support of an established canine orthodontist, with a specific interest in the development of giant breeds.

With canine dentistry having an emerging market, we are concerned that some owners may be persuaded to have their puppies operated on for conditions which could correct themselves naturally given time. There have been several incidences reported to the IWHG in which vets have advised owners, that puppies as young as 10 weeks need surgery to correct dentition faults. This is of great concern, especially considering the potentially harmful effects of general anaesthesia on young sighthound puppies, of which some vets are still not aware.

Our contention is that because of their rapid and prolonged growth, Irish Wolfhound puppies do not conform to the normal pattern of dental development expected in most other breeds (apart from those which are 'flat faced'). We already have several anecdotal examples of puppies whose mouths have continued to alter up until 14 months of age, or even longer.

We are especially interested in whether the position of the deciduous (baby) teeth has a direct effect on the way the adult teeth erupt. It appears that this is one of the concerns of canine orthodontists, who propose that corrective surgery may be required on deciduous teeth to prevent incorrect eruption and placement of permanent teeth. Furthermore, it is suggested that surgery may also subsequently be necessary to prevent the incorrect occlusion of the permanent teeth damaging the normal growth of the jaw. However, none of the dogs that have so far been studied have been giant breeds with longer than average muzzles and a longer than average growth rate. With this in mind, we are keen to track puppies who have less than perfect tooth alignment – with particular attention to the lower canine teeth.

The Kennel Club currently lists "misplaced lower canines" as the only 'Breed Watch' point for Irish Wolfhounds. In the UK, this has not been seen as a particular problem, so it would be useful to be able to present the KC with an accurate picture. We are already in the process of negotiating with the KC to refine the 'Breed Watch' point, so that it only applies to Wolfhounds over 18 months of age.

In addition, we eventually hope to be able to discover what part genetics play in dental development in Irish Wolfhounds - the ultimate aim being to eliminate some painful and debilitating dental conditions, by careful breeding choices.

If you currently have a litter, are expecting one soon, or own a puppy that your vet has told you has a mouth fault, please contact us for further details on how any further information you provide could be beneficial to this study.

**Details/enquiries: Caroline Sheppard** email: [goldswift.sighthounds@gmail.com](mailto:goldswift.sighthounds@gmail.com)



## Dentition Study – Breeder Survey Form

All information supplied will be treated with strictest confidence – and anonymity of individual dogs will be preserved at all times.

**(1) Have you ever bred a puppy with an overshot jaw?**

If 'Yes' (a) approximately by how much did the top jaw overlap?

(b) were the canines misaligned?

(c) did the lower canines press into the soft palate, or gums?

(d) did the puppy continue to have a dental problem in adulthood?

**(2) Have you ever bred a puppy with a scissor bite, whose lower canines pressed into the soft palate, or gums?**

If 'Yes' (a) did your vet suggest an operation to remove the lower canines (baby teeth)?

(b) If this was done, did the adult canines erupt and align normally? At what age was correct alignment achieved?

(c) If this was **not** done, did the adult canines erupt and align normally? At what age was correct alignment achieved?

<b>NAME</b>
<b>CONTACT DETAILS – email</b>
<b>Telephone</b>
<b>Address</b>

Would you happy to provide further information to this survey, if asked?

Please return your form to: -

**Caroline Sheppard (IWHG Dentition Survey) email: [goldswift.sighthounds@gmail.com](mailto:goldswift.sighthounds@gmail.com)**

*~ Thank you ~*



## Dentition Study – Owner Survey Form

All information supplied will be treated with strictest confidence – and anonymity of individual dogs will be preserved at all times.

<b>NAME</b>
<b>CONTACT DETAILS – email</b>
<b>Telephone</b>
<b>Address</b>

**Current age of puppy**

**Does your puppy have misaligned teeth/jaws at present? If so, please describe how his/her mouth looks**


**Has your vet recommended surgery and/or a referral to a canine orthodontist?**

**Does your puppy appear to be in pain and/or have difficulty eating?**

If the top jaw overlaps the bottom jaw (**overshot**):-

- (a) approximately by how much does the top jaw overlap?
- (b) are the canines misaligned?
- (c) do the lower canines press into the soft palate, or gums?
- (d) Does the entire lower jaw fit within the upper jaw – i.e. is the lower jaw narrow?

Would you happy to provide further information to this survey, if asked? This would include providing photographs of your puppy's mouth as it develops.

Please return your form to:

**Caroline Sheppard** email: [goldswift.sighthounds@gmail.com](mailto:goldswift.sighthounds@gmail.com)

*Thank you ~*