Greyhounds Australasia (GA) recently announced a ban on Surgical Artificial Insemination (SAI) from 1 January 2026, transitioning to frozen semen artificial insemination via Transcervical Insemination (TCI)— a less invasive, non- surgical method already widely used in canine reproduction.

Both SAI and TCI are intra-uterine insemination procedures, which deliver the semen directly into the uterus to achieve high pregnancy rates.
TCI provides a method of intra-uterine semen delivery without the risks and complications associated with general anaesthetic and surgical procedures.
It is tolerated well by most breeding females without the need for sedation and is a quick and pain-free procedure when undertaken by experienced veterinarians.

The factors to ensure success with frozen semen TCI are no different to that of SAI, with the only difference being the procedure used to deliver semen into the uterus. When considering semen preparation and handling, recommendations are the same for TCI as for SAI.

GA is recommending breeders start using TCI now, if possible.

If you have any questions you can talk to your local controlling body or GA, and it is encouraged you ask your vet about their experience with TCI.

FAQs

1. **What's TCI – and why is SAI being phased out?**

TCI is a way of placing semen directly into the uterus using a scope and passing a catheter through the cervix to inject semen directly into the uterus, with no surgery or anaesthetic needed. Dogs stay awake and are standing for the procedure.

The Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) has a Policy for vets, which means they had to stop doing SAI on 1 January 2024. GA's rule change follows that advice. It's all about improving animal welfare and ensuring safer breeding, which meets modern standards.

2. **Does TCI actually work as well as SAI?**

Yes, and like SAI, TCI success depends on:

- Using good quality semen (morphology and motility)
- Getting the timing spot-on via repeat progesterone testing
- A vet who's experienced in AI procedures

Reported canine (all breeds) success rates (depending on semen type):

- Fresh semen: 80–90% pregnancy rate
- Chilled semen: 60–80% pregnancy rate
- Frozen semen: 50–70% pregnancy rate

However, Greyhounds are known to have good fertility, straightforward for the insertion of the TCI catheter, and are anticipated to have higher conception rates with good AI timing.

- A study on greyhounds in the USA, using frozen semen showed an 89% whelping rate when TCI was well-timed and current GA data has a whelping rate of 80% for TCI in greyhounds.

3. What kind of semen works with TCI – and what are the standards?

Importantly, GA's frozen semen standards haven't changed — the amount needed in a breeding unit of semen is the same for TCI and SAI and are based on the internationally agreed minimum standards for dogs.

Frozen semen

- Must have at least 100 million good-quality, moving (motile) sperm in each straw (breeding unit)
- Best if 40% or more are still moving (motility) well after thawing (70% or more is ideal)
- Where motility and sperm quality are poor, most vets recommend using doses with around 150 million sperm to give a safety margin
- When frozen and thawed, semen extenders and thawing mediums are used to enhance semen quality and longevity, particularly where semen motility and quality are poor

Chilled or fresh semen

- Same 100 million minimum
- Chilled semen should be used within 24–48 hours
- Aim for motility of 50–75% or more

4. How do I know the best time to inseminate?

Getting the timing right with the female's ovulation is critical for success.

The best way to track ovulation is through:

- Repeat blood progesterone tests (most accurate)
- Vaginal swabs (cytology)
- Vaginal examination (vaginoscopy)

Timing is similar to what was used for surgical AI:

- Frozen semen: inseminate 5–6 days after the LH surge
- Fresh or chilled: inseminate 4–5 days after LH surge

Ask your vet about timing based on progesterone trends. It is important to know that different progesterone machines may produce different results, so your vet's early involvement is important to get the timing right.

5. **How many times do I need to do TCI in a cycle?**

Once is enough, as long as the timing is right and semen quality is good.

Repeated procedures can irritate the uterus, leading to inflammation which might lower the chance of pregnancy.

6. **Do greyhounds tolerate TCI well?**

Yes — greyhounds are generally very relaxed during the procedure, especially when done at the right time.

- Most don't need sedation
- If a dog is anxious or uncooperative, vets might use a mild sedative, but this is not common
- Some vets will request having the owner there to help calm the dog

7. **What if some semen leaks out after insemination?**

That's normal and not a sign of failure — it happens with SAI too. Some leakage at the cervix is expected — it doesn't mean the procedure didn't work.

8. **Is TCI hard for vets to learn?**

It takes practice, but most greyhound AI vets are already trained or in the process of doing advanced training. The AVA has helped run workshops and training courses.

GA has facilitated an on-line workshop for all breeding vets with two registered breeding specialists to present best-practice guidelines for TCI to vets and facilitate a Question-and-Answer session.

Greyhounds are one of the easiest breeds to perform TCI on because of their anatomy and temperament.

9. **What should I be doing now as a breeder?**

GA recommends you:

1. Check in with your frozen semen storage facility & DNA test your new breeding females early
2. Start using TCI now if possible — don't wait until Jan 2026
3. Use progesterone testing to get the timing right
4. Ask your vet about their experience with TCI or training opportunities
5. Talk to your vet, your local Controlling Body or GA if you have questions