

Is Your Puppy Drinking Enough Water?

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Mar 21, 2019 | 4 Minutes



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As a general rule, adult dogs need about one ounce of water per pound of body weight per day. But growing [puppies](#), despite their smaller size, drink more than their adult counterparts. A lot depends, however, on your puppy's age, size, and activity level.

Very young pups fulfill their hydration needs from their mother's milk. As they are being weaned and starting to eat solid food, they will need a fresh supply of water. Generally, young puppies need about one-half cup of water every two hours. You'll want to monitor your puppy to make sure he's drinking enough . . . and not too much.

Older puppies that have already been weaned generally need between one half ounce and one ounce of water per pound of body weight per day. For example, if your pup weighs 20 pounds, he'll need somewhere between 10 and 20 ounces of water each day. On especially active days, he may need even more water.

Your Puppy's Water Intake During Housetraining

The water rules change a bit during house-training. It's best to remove your puppy's water bowl at night. Be consistent with the time you remove water, the same way you're consistent with feeding times. As a rule of thumb, remove the food and water bowls about two-to-three hours before bedtime. So, if your lights-out time is at 11 p.m., a puppy should have no food or water after about 8–8:30 p.m. This gives you a chance to take him out for a one last potty break before settling in for the night.

It's important not to take this advice too far by restricting your pup's water during the day. Puppies are more prone to [dehydration](#) than adult dogs because of their greater need for water. Restricting water intake can also lead to obsessive behavior like resource guarding. So, even while housetraining, you should give your puppy his regular amount of water during the day.

Why Is Water So Important for Puppies?

Water facilitates the metabolic processes – everything from digestion to brain activity, blood flow, and breathing. Blood is mostly composed of water, and as it flows through your dog's body, it clears harmful toxins and transports oxygen. Without water, this exchange can't happen, which can harm vital organs.

Water also regulates your puppy's body temperature. In hot weather, you may see your pup panting. Panting helps keep a dog cool by releasing water through respiration. But, on the other hand, he's losing water through the tongue, so may need to drink more water than usual.



Canine Dehydration

Most dogs, even puppies, naturally self-regulate when it comes to drinking water. But there are cases when your puppy may not drink enough and risk dehydration. There are several things that can cause dehydration, including [vomiting](#), [fever](#), excessive urination, or [diarrhea](#). If your puppy eats mostly dry food, he also may not be getting enough water. And some dogs just don't seem very tempted by their bowl of fresh water. Aside from noticing any of the causes we listed, you can get a good idea of whether your puppy is drinking enough water by monitoring his water intake, using the water-to-body-weight calculation.

There are also a few tests you can do quickly to check for dehydration:

- Grab the scruff of your puppy's neck gently, stretch it out, and then let go. The skin should snap right back into place. If it's slow to snap back, your dog is dehydrated.
- Feel his gums. If they're dry or sticky, he needs more water.

- Press your finger gently against his gums, which temporarily blocks the flow of blood. While you're pressing his gums, the area turns white. When you release the pressure, the area should return to a healthy pink within two seconds. If it takes longer, your puppy is dehydrated. The gums of a normal dog refill immediately, and the gums of a dehydrated dog could take up to three seconds (or more) to refill.

If you notice that your puppy doesn't seem to be drinking enough water, you can make some changes around the house to encourage him to drink:

- Make sure his water bowl is clean, and fill it with fresh water.
- Place his water bowl near his food, bed, or any place he likes to hang out in the house.
- Reward him with a treat and praise him when he takes a drink.
- Flavor his water with bone broth or chicken broth to make it more enticing.
- Offer him ice cubes. Some dogs love chewing on ice cubes, and this is another way to increase water intake.



Overhydration in Dogs

Believe it or not, dogs can overhydrate, as well. Also called “water intoxication,” overhydration can be as dangerous as dehydration. It can be caused by drinking too much, and also by water the dog inadvertently takes in while swimming or playing in the water.

If you suspect that your dog is overhydrated or exhibiting any of these symptoms, contact your veterinarian:

- Lethargy
- Nausea
- Loss of coordination
- Staggering
- Bloating

- Dilated pupils
- Excessive salivation
- Vomiting
- Pale gums

Also, puppies that drink more water than they usually do may have [polydipsia](#), which could be a sign of underlying metabolic changes, such as kidney issues, infection of the uterus, [diabetes](#), or [Cushing's disease](#). This is especially true if it's paired with an increase in urination. Always check with your veterinarian if you have concerns about the puppy's water intake.

Having a new puppy brings with it so many responsibilities. You have to decide what food to use, [which toys are safe](#) and fun, [how to housetrain](#), how to teach a pup the house rules, and so much more. But monitoring water intake is just as important and should become a part of routine daily care. Proper hydration contributes to your puppy's overall health and well-being.