

We know about the importance of keeping our human bodies hydrated, but equally critical is ensuring that our pets drink enough water.

A dog's body is comprised of approximately 80% water, compared to a human's which is made up of 55% to 60% water. Hydration is important any time of year and is especially critical during the summer months and in warmer climates.

How much water does your dog need?

A good rule of thumb is to have your dog consume 1 oz of water per pound of body weight. Therefore, if your pup weighs 50 pounds, he should drink between six and seven 8 oz glasses of water. You can measure how many glasses of water your dog's bowl holds to easily track how many bowls of water your pup should drink each day.

Additionally, it's important to ensure your pet's water supply stays fresh and is rotated out regularly with clean water. Water will need to be rotated even more frequently for dishes that are kept outside. Wash your pet's water bowl daily to prevent harmful bacteria from growing.

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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

PET HYDRATION



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What are the symptoms of dehydration?

What if you lose track of how much water your pet has been drinking? How can you tell if your fur baby is dehydrated? In both dogs and cats, symptoms include:

- Loss of appetite
- Lethargy
- Excessive panting
- Sunken eyes
- Dry nose and gums
- White gums that linger when pressed
- Dark urine

Another symptom is a loss of skin elasticity. If you pinch your pet's skin between your thumb and forefinger and it does not bounce back quickly, your pet may be in need of hydration. In extreme cases of dehydration, your dog may experience seizures or go into a coma. Dogs that are at risk for dehydration include puppies and senior dogs, small breeds, and dogs that are nursing. Cats that are elderly or nursing are more prone to dehydration, along with those with an underlying medical condition.

What to do if your pup is dehydrated?

If your pet exhibits the above symptoms, call your veterinarian immediately to determine the proper course of action. (If you are on vacation with your dog, remember to locate veterinary hospitals in advance so you are prepared.) Your vet may recommend offering small sips of water with close monitoring, or

you may need to take your dog to the vet. Luckily, the prognosis for a dehydrated dog is very good if it is treated early.

What about overhydration?

We often talk about the need to keep pets hydrated, but water intoxication is a risk for those dogs who especially enjoy swimming, retrieving items from the water, or romping through a hose or sprinkler. Overhydration can happen when pets take in a large amount of water at one time, so you should always monitor your dog during water activities. Additionally, dogs that consume their entire bowl of water after a play session are at risk and should have a break before refilling the bowl with more water.

Symptoms of overhydration include:

- Loss of coordination
- Lethargy
- Bloating
- Vomiting
- Glazed eyes
- Excessive salivation
- Difficulty breathing

Pets don't always know how to regulate their play, so it is important to provide regular rest breaks for your dog as well. If you see any symptoms of overhydration, it is crucial that you seek veterinary care immediately.

The bottom line?

Water is the main component in healthy, nutritionally balanced dogs, just as it is for people. Keep your pet's bowl filled with fresh water, monitor water play, and provide plenty of rest and recharge time to have a happy, healthy pet!

