

Can Your Dog Overdose on This Daily Essential?

Needed for life and fun to play in. But can your pet actually overdose on it? In severe cases it can lead to loss of consciousness, seizures, coma, and even death. Dogs that enjoy these two activities are most at risk. Here's what every pet owner should know today.

Reviewed by [Dr. Becker](#)

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- One of the simplest ways to determine if your pet needs to drink more water is to lift some skin at the back of her neck and then let it go
- In a well-hydrated animal, the skin will quickly fall back into place
- If your pet is dehydrated, the skin will fall slower and may stay in a tent formation

Editor's Note: This article is a reprint. It was originally published August 13, 2016.

Pets are like their owners in many ways, and for dogs and cats this includes their need for plenty of pure, fresh water.

Dogs and cats are made up of mostly water, which is required for maintaining crucial body processes like regulating body temperature, flushing out waste, cushioning the brain, and transporting nutrients through the bloodstream.

How much water your pet requires to stay healthy depends on a number of factors, including her size, diet, age, activity level and environment. Hot weather will increase your pet's water requirements, for instance, as will eating a primarily dry-food diet.

It can also be difficult to determine how much water your pet is drinking each day, especially if you have multiple pets sharing the same water bowl. Keeping an eye out for signs of potential dehydration is therefore incredibly important, as is making an effort to increase your pet's water intake if you discover any.

Signs Your Pet May Be Dehydrated

One of the simplest ways to determine if your pet needs to drink more water is to lift some skin at the back of her neck, then let it go. In a well-hydrated animal, the skin will quickly fall back into place. If your pet is dehydrated, however, the skin will fall slower and may stay in a tent formation.

You can also check your pet's gums; they should be moist and slick. If your pet's gums are dry or sticky, she probably needs more water. Also, if you press on your pet's gums, they should turn white and then quickly turn back to pink when you remove your finger.

If the gums take awhile to regain their pink color, your pet may be dehydrated. Other signs of dehydration include:

- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Panting (dogs)
- Sunken or dry eyes, dry nose and gums
- Constipation

Signs of severe dehydration include weakness and difficulty walking. If your pet is severely dehydrated, get to an emergency veterinary center right away, as your pet will need to be given fluids intravenously or subcutaneously.

How Much Water Does Your Pet Need?

A healthy dog should drink, on average, between one-half and 1 ounce of water per pound of body weight each day. A typical cat may require from 5 to 10 ounces of water daily.

Puppies and kittens, as well as senior pets, need more water than adult dogs, and toy dog breeds are also especially prone to dehydration. Pets with certain health conditions, including kidney disease and diabetes, may also require more water than average.

If your cat or dog lived in the wild, her natural diet (prey) would be around 70 percent water. A nutritionally balanced, fresh, species-appropriate diet will also be about 70 to 80 percent water, as will high-quality canned food. On the contrary, dry food is only 5 to 10 percent water.

If your pet is eating moisture-rich food, some of her water requirements will be met during her meals. However, if you're feeding mostly dry food, which isn't recommended, she may need more water than average to compensate for the dry diet.

Feeding cats or dogs a dry-food diet actually puts incredible stress on the kidneys because of its lack of moisture.

How to Get Your Pet to Drink More Water

As mentioned, one of the easiest ways to increase your pet's daily fluid intake is to feed a moisture-rich, fresh, species-appropriate diet or, alternatively, high-quality canned food. If your pet's water intake is still an issue, be sure to offer her fresh, filtered water (in a clean bowl) daily.

Many cats enjoy drinking from a pet water fountain, and you can also give your pet bone broth (and even bone broth popsicles in the summer) to increase her fluid intake. Be sure to also offer your pet extra water when the weather is hot or when she's been very active.

If your dog is still resisting his water bowl, try offering plenty of praise and a treat whenever you catch him taking a drink. It will help reinforce this positive behavior. If you're not sure how much water your pet tends to drink in a day, try to keep a close eye on it so you can gauge what's normal and what's not.

If your pet suddenly starts drinking more or less water than normal, it can be a sign of an underlying health condition that you should have checked out by your veterinarian.

Dogs with pancreatitis, parvovirus, or leptospirosis tend not to drink much water, for instance, while a bladder infection, other types of infection, or a metabolic problem such as Cushing's disease or diabetes can cause excessive thirst and water consumption.

One of the best ways to support animals struggling to maintain their hydration status is to provide homeopathic tissue salts (like Bioplasma®). These all-natural pellets are invaluable in re-establishing electrolyte balance in injured and orphaned wildlife patients, as well as debilitated companion animals.

Does Your Pet Drink Too Much Water?

Some pets, dogs in particular, may drink more water than they need, leading to a potentially deadly condition known as **water intoxication** or hyponatremia. If too much water is ingested, it can throw off the body's electrolyte balance, leading to dangerously low sodium levels.

Signs of water intoxication include bloating, lethargy, pale gums, vomiting and excessive drooling. In severe cases, it can lead to loss of consciousness, seizures, coma and death. Dogs that spend a lot of time in the water are most at risk, as they may lap up water while they're swimming, or diving to retrieve toys.

Dogs that love to play with the spray from a hose or sprinkler are also at risk. If your dog has recently spent time in water and displays any sign of water intoxication, get her to an emergency veterinary center immediately.

Sources and References

[Vet Street June 10, 2016](#)
