

# How Much Water Should a Dog Drink?

Famed veterinarian and author James Herriot has noted that “dogs are connoisseurs of comfort.” When we think of comfort for our dogs, items like soft beds and tasty treats come to mind. But we should also think about a clean full bowl of water. Hydration is an extremely important part of your dog’s overall health. Exactly how much water should a dog drink every day? How can you make sure your canine is getting enough water?

The amount of water consumption depends on a variety of factors, including the size of your dog, the time of year and whether your dog’s diet includes wet food or dry dog food only. If dogs are given dry food only, they will require significantly more supplemental water to stay acceptably hydrated. Normally, a dog will require 2-4 ounces of fresh water in addition to its food. Dry food is only 10 percent water, while canned is approximately 80 percent water. So obviously your dog is going to drink a lot more water if you are providing dry food only.

## How Can I Tell If My Dog Is Getting Enough Water?

There are a few simple signs that will give you a pretty good indication of your dog is staying hydrated:

- Skin elasticity. Gently pull the skin at the base of your dog’s neck (scruff). The skin should spring back when you release it. If it does not, your dog might not be getting enough water.
- A shiny coat without dry flakes is a sign of hydration
- Your dog should exhibit normal physical activity and not be overly lethargic
- Is your dog urinating 2-3 times per day? Leash-walk him or watch as he/she goes outside.

## What Can I Do To Encourage My Dog To Drink More Water?

You can lead a dog to water, but can you make him drink? What should you do if you think your dog is not drinking enough? Water is essential to your dog’s health and can even be instrumental in helping to prevent some severe health issues such as Urological Syndrome. There are a few steps you can make to encourage your dog to stay hydrated:

- Sprinkle a little more water on top of your pet's canned food. This is not recommended for dry food as it may cause it to spoil more rapidly.
- Use metal, glass or pottery type water (and food) bowls. Sometimes plastic leaves a taste that dogs don't like.
- Always make sure the water is fresh and clean. Refresh your dog's water bowl daily.
- Use filtered water instead of tap water. The latter can be heavily chlorinated or have too high a concentration of minerals.

It's very important to pay attention to your dog's "normal" water consumption and take note if that amount happens to change. Any significant increase or decrease in your dog's daily water intake could be a sign of illness. Drinking too much or too little water could be indicative of a urinary cystitis (bladder infection), tapeworm infestation, diabetes or hyperthyroidism. It's time for a trip to your local vet if you notice excessive changes in your dog's daily water intake.

## Some Fast Facts About Feline Water Consumption

- Many dogs, while not wanting to be completely immersed in water, are fascinated by running water. If you don't have a dog that likes to play with a dripping faucet or watch water being flushed down a toilet, you've probably seen a video of one on the Internet. Purchasing an automatic water fountain may be one way to get your dog to consume more water. Both Drinkmate and Petmate make drinking fountains for dogs. They usually cost around \$60-\$70. Smaller continuous water fountains for dogs can sometimes be found discounted on the web for around \$20-\$40.
- Some dogs don't like the taste of "hard" water which is high in concentrates of mineral salts. Try offering distilled or filtered water instead.
- It might be necessary to rinse your dog's water bowl a couple times a day during the warmer months of the year when bacteria can form quickly, esp. if your dog (or others) are heavy droolers.
- Benjamin Franklin once noted in Poor Richard's almanac that "when the well is dry, we know the worth of water." It's not necessary to wait that long to know what it's worth for your dog.

- Make sure that water bowl is filled to the brim with **fresh clean water** every day and you'll contribute greatly to your dog's health.