

Change in Dog's Drinking Habits

The causes and treatments of a change in a dog's normal drinking behavior.

CAUSES OF DRINKING MORE THAN NORMAL (polydipsia)

Environmental: Hot weather.

Non-infectious/Acquired disorders: Chronic renal disease.

Infectious diseases: Leptospirosis or pyelonephritis (kidney infection).

Endocrine disorders: Hyperadrenocorticism (Cushing's disease), diabetes mellitus, diabetes insipidus, primary parathyroid hyperplasia, hyperparathyroidism, pyometra, or hyperthyroidism.

Toxicity: Chocolate, grapes, raisins, ethylene glycol (antifreeze), or cholecalciferol (a rodenticide).

Drug reactions: Diuretics, corticosteroids, or phenobarbital.

Tumors: In pituitary, liver, mediastinum, adrenal glands, or other locations.

Behavioral: Psychogenic water drinking.

Congenital abnormalities: Portosystemic shunt or chronic hepatitis in Dobermans.

What to do: A change in drinking behavior related to water freshness or weather conditions requires no action other than providing unlimited fresh water (even in cold weather), as long as the dog is showing no signs of illness. If your dog's change in drinking behavior is accompanied by signs of illness (vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy, collapse, etc.) or you're not sure what to do, contact your veterinarian or emergency clinic immediately. CAUSES OF DRINKING LESS THAN NORMAL (adipsia)

Environmental: Cool weather, off-flavored or stale water.

Behavioral: Stress (due to travel, moving, etc.).

Infectious disease: Periodontal disease, distemper, leptospirosis, rabies, parvovirus and other viral diseases that cause disorientation/brain dysfunction (meningitis, encephalitis etc); or anorexia (lack of appetite), which is usually accompanied by adipsia. Note: Never handle a dog who may have rabies. If possible, without touching the dog, confine him in a room, pen, or yard and call your local animal control for assistance.

Trauma: To the skull (brain), mouth, or teeth.

Foreign bodies: In mouth.

Tumors: In brain or nasal passages (with extension into brain), or tumors elsewhere causing anorexia (usually accompanied by adipsia).

Toxicity: Ethanol (alcohol), ethylene glycol, or anticoagulant rodenticides (warfarin).

Parasites/Parasite-borne diseases: Rocky Mountain spotted fever or Lyme disease, both of which can cause anorexia.

Miscellaneous disorders: Pancreatitis (causing anorexia) or cognitive dysfunction.

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decisions about your dog's ailment. If you notice changes in your dog's health or behavior, please take your pet to the nearest veterinarian or an emergency pet clinic as soon as possible.

Have a health question about your dog? Ask our vet expert or ask other dog owners on our forums.