

Winter Play Still Demands Water

Proper hydration is just as important for dogs in cooler temperatures.

Jean M. Fogle

Snow seems to bring the puppy out in most dogs. But while they romp, run, burrow, and gallop, you need to remember that snow play is hard, thirsty work. In the summer, we know our dogs need water when they pant and their tongues loll. Cooler temperatures in winter allow dogs to play longer, but drinking enough water is just as critical.

"Hydration is always important for a dog, and fresh water should be available at all times, even in the winter," says Andrea Straka, VMD, of Irondequoit Animal Hospital in Rochester, N.Y. "Playing inside games during the winter is also thirsty work as many heating systems keep houses very dry in the winter, increasing a dog's water requirement."

Inside or out, make sure your dog stays hydrated this winter by following these tips: Take frequent breaks during the activity to offer water.

Encourage your dog to drink before the fun begins. Many dogs get caught up in the excitement of play and refuse to drink.

Offer a sport replenishment drink for dogs that is likely to stop drinking when playing.

Be sure the water bowl at home is always full. Remember dry heat makes water that sits out evaporate more quickly.