

Disease May Cause Dog's Excessive Water Drinking

Tests will eliminate various possible causes of dog's excessive water drinking.

By Jon Geller, DVM

Q. I have a 4-year-old Miniature Schnauzer. She consumes water like she has not had any for days each time she drinks. This causes a lot of trouble in keeping her crate dry. I feel bad about restricting her water. She is not diabetic, but she doesn't have a good appetite so has trouble maintaining her weight. We have only had her for a few months, and she was abused prior coming to us. Any suggestions?

A. It is important not to restrict water intake unless you are absolutely positive that your dog does not need it. A number of diseases should be ruled out by a veterinarian in a dog with polyuria-polydipsia (PUPD), which means the dog drinks and urinates more than usual.

The primary diseases that can cause this are diabetes mellitus, diabetes insipidus, Cushing's disease, renal insufficiency, medullary washout and other kidney diseases. Once these are eliminated as causes, usually with a blood or urine test, a diagnosis of psychogenic polydipsia is made, basically meaning your dog drinks too much because she likes to. Only in these cases is it safe to restrict water intake. The average dog should drink about 2mls per kilogram of weight per hour. For example, a 10-pound dog would drink about 10 mls (2 tsp) per hour, or about 8 fluid ounces per day, assuming it was not hot and the dog is not active or losing water any other way.