

Frequent Feedings Fix Puppy's Vomiting

Restrict water after eating, and feed more frequently to get puppy on track.

By Jon Geller, DVM

Q. I have a 3-month-old Boston Terrier puppy. She is very active. I am feeding her Science Diet for puppies. They are small bites, and she seems to eat fast and doesn't chew much. Sometimes after she eats, she drinks a lot of water and then throws up her food. She doesn't seem to have a fever. Should I change to a bigger bite where she will have to chew her food?

A. Dogs throw up, and puppies are especially skilled at it. Your puppy's problem is easy to solve, but other dog owners may have other issues to consider. In the case of a puppy who eats fast, drinks lots of water, and then throws up, you should do the following:

1. Feed your puppy more frequently so she is not as hungry.
2. Limit the amount of water in her dish, and wait 15 minutes before offering the water after she eats.

She just needs time for her stomach to settle after eating.

It is important to know the difference between regurgitating and vomiting. A dog that vomits repeatedly is sick, and should be seen by a veterinarian. A regurgitating dog, however, is probably not sick, and just needs an adjustment in eating habits or diet.

Regurgitating occurs when a dog throws up right after eating, and the food comes up undigested. Sometimes, it is formed in a tubular shape, since it may have never made it past the esophagus. Usually, there is no major stomach-heaving preceding the event.

Usually, regurgitation is the result of eating too much, eating too fast, or drinking too much water right after eating. Sometimes there can be some underlying problems. The most common one is known as megaesophagus, in which the esophagus basically loses its muscle tone and ability to squeeze food down to the stomach. If a dog regurgitates repeatedly, a visit to the vet is warranted.

Vomiting, on the other hand, is preceded by full-body heaving, and consists of a somewhat dramatic, unpleasant, and malodorous propelling of undigested food and bile, usually onto the best carpet in the house. Vomiting may occur at any time, regardless of when eating occurs, but also can follow drinking water.

Repeated episodes of vomiting, especially in puppies, are serious. Puppies, especially, are prone to dehydration, and vomiting could indicate canine parvovirus, a life-threatening disease. In older dogs, frequent vomiting can indicate liver disease, kidney disease, pancreatitis, intestinal disease or cancer, and should be checked out by a veterinarian.