

New Dog Kennel Leads to Psychogenic Adypsea

With all the comforts of home, dog eventually will adjust.

By Jon Geller, DVM

Q. We have noticed two problems with our dog since we started placing him in our backyard kennel during the day. First, he won't drink from his water bowl during the day. We have a large glass bowl, filled with fresh water daily, and set in the shade. We've also tried a stainless steel bowl. We have also tried his indoor stainless steel bowl in addition to the glass water bowl. When we get home, he drinks and drinks, often followed by mild vomiting.

Our second problem is that he looks at his tail, and whines or barks. I thought maybe this was just an itch, so I scratch it for him. Apparently, that isn't enough. I noticed yesterday that he has chewed all the hair off the right side of his tail and a quarter-sized place on his lower hip area. He did this in one day while we were at work.

Any suggestions?

A. It sounds like your dog has with psychogenic adypsea. This high-priced medical terminology basically means that your little guy is not happy about being in a kennel all day, and refuses to drink to show his displeasure. Since he has a nice igloo, grass flooring and a canvas shade top, I would not worry too much about his lack of water intake during the day. If he gets thirsty enough, he will drink. It seems like the least he can do is show a little appreciation for the upscale quarters you have provided him during the day by drinking his water.

It also sounds like he is creating a little drama every evening with his large quantities of water and subsequent retching. You can slow down this unpleasant demonstration by restricting the amount of water he can have at one time when he comes inside. Offer him just a third of his normal amount, and then wait a few minutes before allowing him to drink another.

I would also venture a guess that he has impacted or infected anal glands. These paired glands are located under the tail and secrete a foul-smelling fluid that marks their feces for other dogs to identify. When these glands get full, they can become inflamed and irritated, often driving dogs wild to the point where they make bite at their flank and act very uncomfortable. A veterinary visit is required to get them checked out and expressed.