

Ration Water to Vomiting Dog

Drinking too fast is most likely cause of dog's vomiting, despite recent snakebite.

By Jon Geller, DVM

Q. Three weeks ago, our 7-year-old German Shepherd Dog was bitten by something on his front and back leg, possibly by a snake. He was really swollen from it, but now it seems to be going down. The bites are draining. He has been eating well. However, three days ago he started to vomit every time he drinks water. He will eat, but we have to make him wait hours afterward to drink because he just loses what he ate if he drinks water.

What can we do? We live in Belize, and vets are rare here.

A. The only time I was in Belize I almost stepped on a fer-de-lance, one of the most poisonous snakes in the Western Hemisphere. Luckily I avoided getting bitten. Most likely your German Shepherd was bitten by a more benign snake or other creature, because it sounds like he is improving.

It is unusual for dogs to vomit after drinking water, but not after eating. Some dogs tend to drink water too quickly, and it can stretch out their stomach, triggering receptors in the stomach wall to cause vomiting. One idea to start with is to only offer small amounts of water at a time.

To make sure he is getting enough water, switch him to a canned diet. This will minimize the amount of water he needs to drink.

If you were in the U.S., your veterinarian would probably give you some anti-vomiting medication to give your dog when he eats to help settle his stomach. Over-the-counter medications that might help are Pepcid (10 mg twice a day) and Pepto-Bismol (follow dose recommendations for adult humans).

Hopefully, this problem is not related to some toxicity from a snakebite. If your dog starts vomiting food as well as water, you may need to find a veterinarian in Belize City, or Ambergis Caye where Americans tend to congregate.