

Thirsty Dog Is Also Losing Weight

More drinking, losing weight point to kidney failure or diabetes.

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Q. My 2-year-old Labrador Retriever Jazz has been mopey, lost weight, and is drinking a lot of water. She won't eat on her own, but will eat if I hold the food in my hand. She does get excited if I ask her if she wants a doggie snack. Any advice? We did take her and have her checked for heartworms not too long ago. Thanks for any advice you can give.

A. Increased water intake and weight loss are definitely cause for concern, and should prompt a visit to your veterinarian for an exam and blood tests.

The two leading causes of these signs together would be kidney failure and diabetes mellitus.

Kidney failure would be unusual in such a young dog, but occasionally a genetic defect such as malformed kidneys can catch up with them during their first few years. Malformed kidneys can lose their ability to concentrate water, resulting in frequent drinking, urination and weight loss when protein is lost in the urine.

Diabetes usually occurs in middle-aged to older dogs, but can occur in younger dogs, too. Because dogs with diabetes cannot absorb sugar normally, so sugar and calories are lost in their urine, pulling large volumes of water along. The result is increased water intake to replace lost water, and loss of weight because of the lost calories.

There are other causes of increased water intake and weight loss, but simple blood tests can help rule out diabetes or kidney failure.