

Your Dog's Water

Think that finding a good, high-quality dog food is important?

All of the beneficial ingredients that go into dog food will not help your dog if he is not drinking enough water. Water is the body's most important nutrient. Adult dogs' bodies are 60% water, and a puppy's is 84% water. Dogs can lose all of their fat and half of their protein without adversely affecting their health, but a loss of 10 % of their water can cause significant problems. Dog owners should place as much attention on the quality of the water their dog drinks as they do on the ingredients that go into the best dog foods; not all water is the same.

The criteria for clean drinking water for dogs is similar to the criteria for drinking water for people. Tap water generally provides the best nutrients and least contaminants; if, however, the tap water contains high amounts of magnesium, nitrates, and iron it can cause long term health risks. For those who fear their tap water may be contaminated, bottled water can be a better choice.

Stainless steel and stoneware dishes are good, safe choices for food and water bowls. Plastic bowls may scratch, giving unhealthy contaminants an ideal place to live. The water should be cool in the summer and room temperature in the winter. The dog's bowl should always be clean. If you're not sure if it needs changing, ask yourself if you would drink the water # if the answer is no, change it.

Dogs should have access to fresh water at all times. This is even more important than giving it the best dog foods on the market. Dogs need three times more water than they do food every day. They need even more water if it is extremely hot, the dog is lactating, or if the dog is exercising more than normal. Dogs that eat canned dog food do not need to drink as much water because of the high amount of water contained in the food.

Often, sick dogs don't want to drink the water they need, but the illness increases the need for water. When this happens, a dog can become quickly dehydrated. To check for dehydration, dog owners can pull upward on the dog's skin at the nape of the neck. If the skin snaps back, the dog is sufficiently hydrated, if it takes several seconds for the skin to go back, fluids may need to be replaced intravenously or subcutaneously. Owners should never offer water to vomiting dogs; this is perhaps the only time to make sure dogs don't have access to water. If a dog vomits for more than a twenty-four hour period it should see a vet immediately.

In addition to better health, proper hydration contributes to the performance of a dog. Many owners of working dogs flavor their dog's food in order to make sure it is drinking the appropriate amounts. Studies have proven that proper hydration increases an animal's working ability by 80%. The next time you pour one of those "better" dog foods into your dog's bowl, remember that if the dog doesn't have the right amount of clean water, the food is useless.