

Dehydration in Dogs and How To Manage it

It is crucial that you keep an eye on your dog's hydration levels, especially in the hotter weather as dehydration can result in health problems and can even be life-threatening. So how do you know if your dog is dehydrated, what causes dehydration and what can you do to ensure that it doesn't happen.

So, What Are The Causes Of Dehydration In Dogs?

Heat - overheating is one of the most common causes of dehydration. This could be from being out on a hot or even warm day or overheating from too much exercise without enough water.

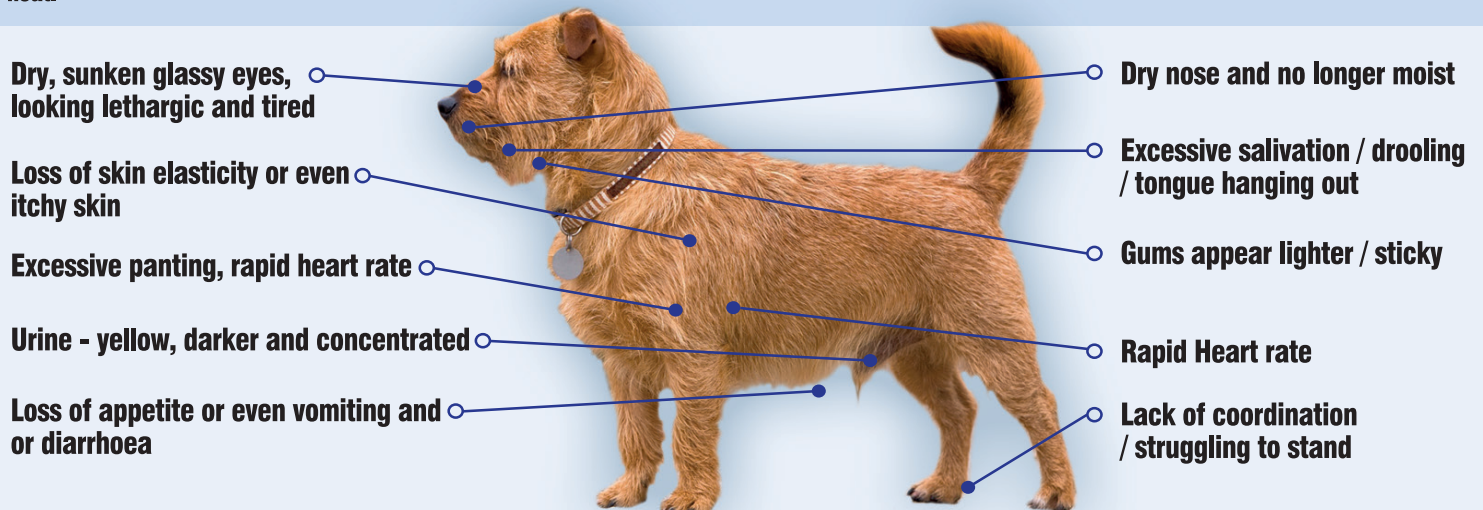
Injury or Illness - Dehydration can be a sign that something is going on such as certain conditions - diabetes, Cushings or kidney disease for example. If your dog has been vomiting or had diarrhoea this can lead quickly to dehydration.

Not Enough Water - simply, your dog may not be drinking sufficient water, especially if the weather is warm, to replace the water lost through your dogs' cooling mechanism such as panting. Drinking water will help cool your dog's body from the inside and help prevent overheating. Water can also transport heat away from your dog's vital organs.

Did you know that dogs are unable to sweat? So their only option to help them to cool down is to pant. So, during hot weather dogs can become dehydrated very quickly?






So, What Are The Signs Of Dehydration In Dogs?

So, what signs & symptoms should I look out for? Below are the most common signs and symptoms of dehydration:-Also, did you know that dogs with darker coats will absorb more heat than those with lighter coats? Hairy dogs, short nosed dogs and young and old dogs are also more vulnerable to heat.



If you suspect your dog is presenting with symptoms then move them to a cool area immediately. Try and cool the body down with cool water, a fan and encourage your dog to drink, if possible. You may need to contact your vet.

Tips to keep you dog cool

-  **Fresh Water Is Available** - Make sure that your dog has plenty of fresh water, especially during warmer weather, to replace the water which has been lost. Also make sure your dog's water bowl is clean and water is frequently replaced to encourage your dog to drink. Add broth to make water more exciting.
-  **Feed Moisture-Rich Food** - Did you know that the food that you feed contains water? The amount of water in dog food does vary depending on the type of food you are feeding. Raw food naturally contains a lot of good quality, hydrating water whereas commercial kibble doesn't contain much and may require additional water to be added.
-  **Adapt Your Dog's Exercise Regime** - Going on long walks increases your dog's body temperature and can cause overheating and heatstroke; especially on warmer days. Remember that the pavements can also be very hot and this can quickly burn your dogs' delicate paws. Stick to grassy areas. So only exercise your dog in the early morning and late evening when cooler and keep your dog inside and cool during the hottest part of the day. Make sure your dog has access to a cool room or a cool tiled floor. Alternatively go swimming - which is great exercise and good for the joints!
-  **Avoid Car Travel and Avoid Confined Spaces** - such as caravans and conservatories. Do not leave your dog in a car, at any time when the weather is warm, even if parked in the shade as the inside of the car can quickly become very hot, like an oven, in a relatively quick time, even if outside it doesn't feel that hot.
-  **Keep Them Cool** - by looking at ways to keep your dog's temperature down. A fan is a good way to reduce your dog's temperature. Buy a paddling pool and place in the shade, so your dog's body can be surrounded by water. Alternatively try frequently hosing them down with cool water, making sure their coats are thoroughly wet including the belly and inside of their legs. Also think frozen dog treats or cooling accessories such as gel mats, coats or bandannas to help absorb the heat.