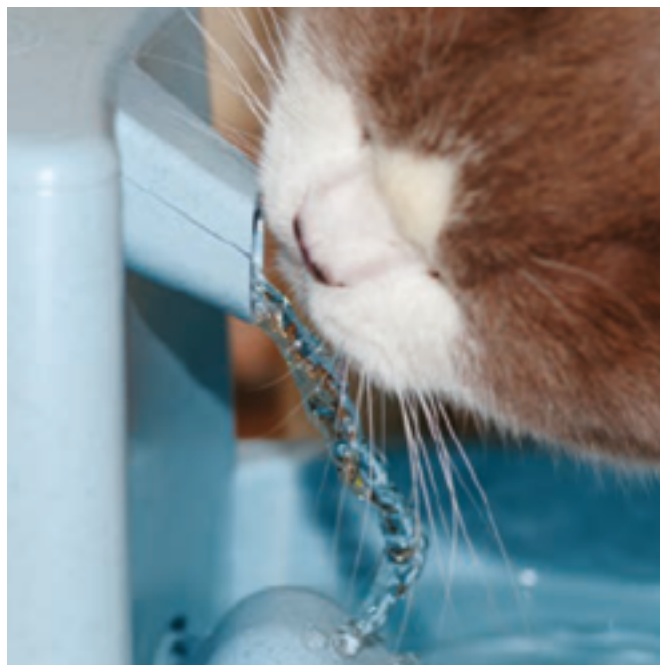


**Hydration**

HYDRATION IN PETS

Water is a vital nutrient. Fresh, clean water should be provided at all times to pets. Healthy pets will typically adjust their water intake to meet their needs. Although adequate hydration is always important, there are times when extra consideration should be paid to a pet's hydration status and/or when increased water consumption is encouraged.

**Key Messages**

- To monitor a pet's hydration status at home, the owner can use:
 - Skin tent test – after gently pinching and releasing a fold of the pet's skin, the skin should immediately return (“snap back”) to its original position.
 - Gum color and feel – after briefly pressing a finger against the gums, the gum color at that spot will blanch (whiten) but should return to its original color within 2 seconds. The pet's gums should also feel moist and warm.
- Pets are at increased risk of becoming dehydrated if they have an underlying health issue, such as GI upset (vomiting and diarrhea) or kidney disease, or when overheated. Senior pets might become dehydrated simply because they may be less inclined to drink. Very active dogs are also at risk and may need to be encouraged to drink.

(continued on next page)

**DID YOU
KNOW?**

Outdoor cats may meet all of their water needs by eating prey such as mice and birds.

Key Messages (continued)

- A recommendation to increase water intake is typically made for pets with urolithiasis and cats with idiopathic cystitis in order to increase urine volume and dilute the urine. Since increased water intake may also soften the stool, increased water intake also is recommended for cats prone to constipation.
- Methods to increase water intake in pets include:
 - Feed wet food, which has a high moisture content.
 - Feed dry food mixed with water to increase moisture content.
 - To decrease resource competition in multi-pet households, offer multiple water bowls.
 - Since cats may have individual preferences, offer cats various options for drinking, such as different bowls, still versus moving water, and cool versus cold water.
 - Offer a nutrient-enriched, flavored water supplement.

The Purina Institute aims to help put nutrition at the forefront of pet health discussions by providing user-friendly, science-based information that helps pets live longer, healthier lives.