



Is Ice Water Safe for Dogs?



Posted by Laura Goldman on June 19, 2014 // Comments



A rumor is floating around social media that letting your dog drink ice water can cause deadly [bloat](#). But is it true?

No, say many veterinarians — as long as your dog doesn't gulp huge quantities of ice water (or water at any temperature, for that matter.) Even the website Snopes.com has debunked this as yet another urban myth.

The rumor has been around since at least 2007, when an email from an unknown source was quoted in several blogs. The same email circulated in 2010, and again this week on Facebook. (It seems to reappear whenever the weather starts to [heat up](#).)

According to the email, a show dog named Baran began [dry-heaving](#) and [drooling](#) after drinking from his water bowl, into which the writer had put a handful of ice. The dog was rushed to a [vet](#), who determined there was no damage to his vital organs.

Here's the questionable portion of the email:

"When I told the vet about the ice water, he asked why I gave him ice water. I said that I have always done this. I told him my history behind this practice and his reply was, '[You] have been very lucky.' The ice water I gave Baran caused violent muscle spasms in his stomach which caused the bloating. Even though I figured his temperature was down enough to feed, and gave him this ice water, I was wrong. His internal temperature was still high.

The vet stated that giving a dog ice to chew or ice water is a big NO NO! There is no reason for a dog to have ice/water. Normal water at room temperature, or cooling with cold towels on the inner thigh, is the best way to help cool a dog. The vet explained it to me like this: If you, as a person, fall into a frozen lake what happens to your muscles? They cramp. This is the same as a dog's stomach."

Bloat, also known as gastric dilation/volvulus syndrome (GDV), can occur after a dog eats a large meal, causing his stomach to dilate. The food and gas can't be expelled, and pressure in the stomach increases. This restricts blood flow to the stomach lining, and can make the stomach flip or rupture. Deep-chested dogs, including [Great Danes](#), [Saint Bernards](#) and [Weimaraners](#), are the most prone to bloat.

But ice water — as long as a dog consumes it in moderation — is not likely to cause it.

"If the dog is overheated and [dehydrated](#), and desperate for fluids, and they consume huge, huge amounts of ice cubes or water all at one time — it could create a situation where the dog could bloat," Dr. Randall Carpenter, DVM, told [FOX 17](#).

However, ice water can slow down a dog's digestion, according to i Love Dogs' [Ask a Vet](#), Dr. Patrick Mahaney.

"The application of freezing cold temperatures to internal organ tissues, like the inside of the esophagus, stomach or intestines, can cause acute onset vasoconstriction that reduces blood flow, nutrient delivery, oxygenation and metabolic waste removal from the site," he told [Pet360.com](#).

"This can also affect muscular contraction and slow down normal peristalsis, which is the unconscious movement of muscular tissue lining the intestine."

Dr. Patty Khuly wrote on [PetMD.com](#) back in 2010 that, of the many emails she regularly receives warning her of pet hazards, this particular one made her the craziest.

"Though undoubtedly well-intentioned, the problem is obvious: The writer is misguidedly offering up her story as a helpful truth," she wrote. "When, in fact, the information is unproven, unreliably sourced, unverified and utterly unnecessarily disseminated to the public — to the potential detriment of dogs who may indeed benefit from drinking cold water or getting ice cubes in their water to brake their drinking binges."

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