

Your Pet and Fluid Therapy

What is fluid therapy?

Fluid therapy is administration of specially formulated liquids for treatment of disease or prevention of problems. More than half of body weight is water, so all animals need to take in fluids every day.

Why is fluid therapy given?

Pets normally take in enough fluids by drinking. There are many reasons a pet might not get enough fluids.

A healthy pet that is undergoing anesthesia may need to receive fluids to help maintain normal blood pressure during the procedure to replace fluids lost in surgery. In addition, the catheter serves as an access point should the need for emergency drugs arise.

A sick pet that is not drinking, or is vomiting or experiencing diarrhea also needs fluids to make up for what is not being taken in or is being lost.

Some pets have problems with organs, such as the kidneys, which prevent their bodies from utilizing the fluids they drink.

Other sick pets have problems with their electrolytes, such as sodium or potassium. Fluids are given to these pets to help bring them back to a normal electrolyte balance.

What is in the fluids?

There are several kinds of fluids and electrolytes that we can use, and our veterinarians choose the specific ones that will best help your pet. Fluids have water, of course, and they may contain sodium, potassium and/or glucose, plus other electrolytes. For the safety of your pet, all of the fluids are sterile, which requires special packaging and handling.

How are fluids given?

Fluids are generally administered through a catheter placed in your pet's vein. This is called intravenous fluid (IV) therapy. It gets the fluids into the body fairly quickly, and it allows us to measure and control the amount and rate of fluids that are administered.

Sometimes veterinarians work with pet owners so owners can give fluids to their pet at home. This type of administration is referred to as subcutaneous because the sterile fluids are placed just under your pet's skin.

This usually occurs when a pet has an ongoing condition, where the pet has received initial treatment in the hospital and then is being maintained on a regular schedule of subcutaneous fluids at home. If this is necessary for your pet, we will teach you how.



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Your veterinary practice's contact information

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