



GETTING KITTY TO DRINK

Did you know that your cat's ancestors most likely were evolved from desert dwellers? That might explain why many of them tend to not drink enough water – which can cause them health problems. If you're reading these tips, it's likely your veterinarian has determined that inadequate water consumption has contributed to the problem. So, we have some tips for you to help you encourage your feline friend to get more water into his system.

- ✚ If your cat will eat canned food, follow your veterinarian's directions as to what diet to feed but try to give at least $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ can per day. You can add a little warm water to the food and stir it up to a thinner consistency as well. Most cats will readily accept this method. Canned food is mostly water and this is usually an easy way to increase intake. Generally, offer canned food 2-3 times daily.
- ✚ Make sure your cat has unlimited access to fresh, cool water. Change the water frequently (more than once a day, if possible) and wash the bowls daily. Some different types of containers to consider are flat ceramic bowls, coffee mugs and shallow, glass bowls, or stainless steel bowls. Try to stay away from plastic bowls, however, since they tend to hold odors. Many cats don't like anything touching their whiskers, so keep bowls full. Experiment with different bowls, cups, etc., to see which your cat prefers. Place several water sources around your home – at least one on every floor if you have more than one story. Try to place them in areas where your cat eats or spends a lot of time.
- ✚ Since we know that water can sometimes taste or smell funny, you may want to try using some different methods to get rid of those – you can use a Brita® filter and pitcher, refrigerate the water or try bottled water.
- ✚ Some cats like to drink directly from the tap. If your cat is one of those, try to leave a faucet dripping while you're in the bathroom. Try to turn on the tap, just a drizzle, frequently when you are home.
- ✚ Try adding a drop or two of tuna or clam juice to kitty's water. Make sure there is a bowl of fresh water available too. If kitty likes flavored water, you can make some ice cubes from water flavored with tuna, clam or salmon juice or low sodium broth. Be sure to add only a couple of drops of whatever you're using to just get a hint of flavor into the water.

- ✚ Be sure to keep your cat's food and water FAR from his litter area. Cats also seem to drink more from water sources that are not next to their food, so try having an extra bowl somewhere else – for example in a bathroom that doesn't have a litter box.
- ✚ Consider purchasing a pet fountain. They continuously circulate water so it stays fresh. However, it still needs to be washed and rinsed regularly. Cats seem to like the little stream that comes out and the basin is nicely flat to not interfere with whiskers.
- ✚ Remember never to give your cat regular cow's milk. As silly as it sounds, many cats are lactose intolerant and milk will upset their digestive systems. If your veterinarian approves, you can add a little yogurt to your cat's diet as a daily treat or you can try a little lactose-free milk made just for cats called Cat-Sip®. It is available in most pet stores and may be used by itself or you can add a little to the water too.

