

**WATER OF LIFE: WHY, WHEN AND HOW TO ADMINISTER FLUIDS TO  
THE EXOTIC PATIENT (BIRDS, REPTILES)**

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Water of life to me, being a Scot, is whisky. To every other animal water IS life. This presentation will be a refresher for those of you who have been in exotics/zoo practice for a while and an overview of why, how and when for the beginner.

Mammals are 50 – 80% fluid, birds are 65 – 70% and reptiles are between 60 and 80%. So, no matter what the species, water is a crucial element for life, vital for most processes within the body from thermoregulation to lubrication of joint surfaces.

When an animal is sick whether through trauma or illness there are fluid losses and/or there is a decrease in the uptake of fluids from food and water. Most ill animals that are presented to a surgery will be dehydrated. So, as well as considering fluid therapy when there are more obvious losses such as vomiting, diarrhoea, excessive bleeding and urination perhaps fluid therapy should be considered for most of the patients that come through the door.

References

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- DIVERS, S. J. (2016) Management of Reptiles. <http://www.msdivetmanual.com/exotic-and-laboratory-animals/reptiles/management-of-reptiles>. Accessed August 30, 2017