

DIPSTICKING TO MONITOR STONE-FORMERS & THEIR DIETS

Remember high school chemistry when litmus paper revealed if a solution was either acid or alkaline? Modern dipsticks from your vet or drug store are "super" litmus paper. They are simple to use by the Dal's owner and show exact degrees of urinary pH.

A quick dip into a dog's urine before feeding will indicate if the pH is **acidic** (how much below the normal of 7.0) or **alkaline** (how much above the normal of 7.0). With a program of regular dipsticking and keeping a diary of the results, any Dalmatian can be tracked to detect when and how long it is producing abnormal and unstable urine, often much before abnormal crystals progress into stone formation.

Dipsticking is best done first thing in the A.M. before feeding and after the Dalmatian has been indoors overnight when urine has accumulated in the bladder over the course of many hours. Some very conscientious owners dipstick also a few hours after feeding to monitor any difference in pH between fasting urine and the pH a few hours after the Dal has digested its meal.

All Dalmatians are born with a tendency to acidic urine in which the occurrence and growth of abnormal urate crystals and stones thrive. The success of preventative anti-urate diets and drugs thus can be monitored by dipsticking and treatment regimens modified if the pH continues to be undesirably acidic.

Some dogfood formulations produce an acidic urine and dipsticking will also help to reveal those that do and therefore which should be avoided for stone-forming Dalmatians.

**ONE MAJOR GOAL OF PREVENTION IS TO MAINTAIN A PLATEAU OF
NORMAL (FOR DALMATIANS) URINARY pH BETWEEN 6.5 AND 7.0.**

Dipsticks, also known as "chemstrips," can be purchased from your veterinarian or drug store. If those sources do not stock them, look in the yellow pages of your telephone directory under "Medical Supply Companies."

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