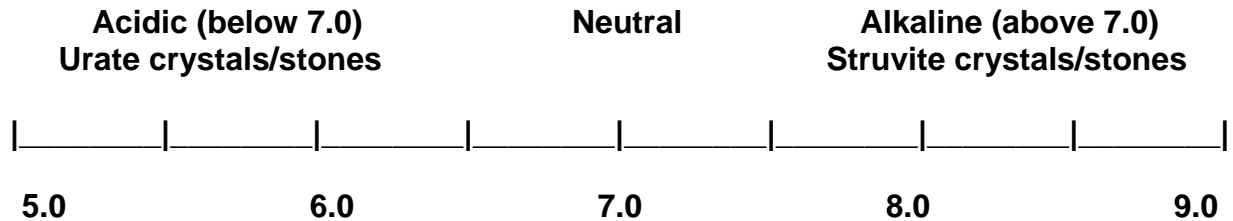


Urine pH



Urate (Dalmatian) crystals and stones form in acidic urine (under 7.0 pH). Struvite also called "infectious" crystals and stones form in alkaline urine (above 7.0 pH). Abnormal crystals found in urine are identifiable under microscope. Their treatment is very different!

The most commonly-seen urate stones in Dalmatians may not be seen under normal x-ray procedures. Urate stones require "indirect radiography" to be seen.

Remember high school chemistry when litmus paper revealed if a solution was either acidic or alkaline? Modern pH test strips from your vet or the drug store are "super" litmus paper. They are simple to use and show the exact urine pH.

A quick dip into your dog's urine before feeding will indicate if the pH is **acidic** (below the normal of 7.0) or **alkaline** (above the normal of 7.0). With a program of regular dipsticking and tracking the results, you can detect if and when your dog has produced abnormal and unstable urine. Often long before abnormal crystals progress into stone formation.

The MAJOR goal of prevention is to maintain a plateau of normal (for Dalmatians) urinary pH – 6.5 - 7.0. Our dogs rarely have a urine pH of 7; 6.5 is normal for our dogs. Check fresh urine pH often and keep a diary of the readings. Determine what is normal for your dog.

If the pH goes **below** 6.5 (into the **acidic** area of 6.0 or less) and stays there over the course of several readings, consider re-evaluating your dog's diet and consult with your vet for additives to alkalinize the metabolizing of the current food.

If the pH goes **above** 7.5 (into the **alkaline** area) and stays there over the course of several readings, contact your vet to rule out a possible urinary track infection.

When obtaining a urine sample, collect a specimen either first thing in morning before feeding (after urine has sat unemptied in the bladder overnight) or after the dog has not urinated for at least five to six hours. Do not obtain a sample after your dog has recently urinated when the bladder may be flushed of any crystals or small stones. Always deliver the urine to vet as soon as possible after collecting. Do not refrigerate.