

# DALMATIAN PUPPY CARE INSTRUCTIONS

From Michele Markoff (Troika Dalmatians)

## Feeding

Puppy should be fed 3x a day until approximately three months of age, when they can be cut back to 2x daily. The food they are on now is [4 Health Puppy \(Carried by Tractor Supply\)](#). At 4 months, transition them to [4 Health Lamb and Rice Adult food kibble \(Carried by Tractor Supply\)](#) supplemented by a bit of fresh eggs, yogurt, or chicken. This is an all-life stages food and thus this is a food you can feed for the life of your dog. At 26% protein, it is nutritious enough for puppies. However, as Dalmatians have a genetic propensity to form uric acid stones which result from too high consumption of purines (a component of protein), Dalmatians should always be fed kibble that is SWIMMING in a liberal amount of water to prevent the concentration of urine that can contribute to the formation of stones.

Starting amount of food:

1 ½ cups of kibble floating in equivalent amount of water.

At 7:00 am, at 1:00 pm, and at 6:00 pm. He may need a snack before bed.

Dals should be given ample and frequent opportunity to empty their bladders to ensure that stones do not form. The urine of Males in particular must be kept very dilute throughout their lives. Dilute urine does not form stones. This is a life or death matter. A male that obstructs will die of a burst bladder within a short period of time. If your dog struggles to pee and cannot, or simply dribbles, run do not walk to the nearest vet and have him catheterized. Or if he or she appears to have blood in their urine (urinary tract infection): this happens often when stones are present or forming. THEN CALL ME

A variety of fresh foods can be added to the kibble to give it (and all the water you must add) more flavor. I favor adding a dollop of canned turkey or chicken dog food to the kibble at each meal. Homemade turkey, chicken and vegetable soups and stews can also be made to give kibble more flavor. Steamed vegetables appeal to a lot of Dals, as does fruit (Never feed grapes to a dog). Vanilla yogurt or cottage cheese can also be a treat (1 tbsp) to top off kibble. Stay away from foods high in purines, which is the component of protein that contributes to stone formation. A list of purine rich foods to avoid can be found at the Dalmatian Club of America website: [www.thedca.org](http://www.thedca.org) in the health section, but the most important thing is to stay away from organ meats.

## Grooming

Dalmatians don't need to be bathed very often. A quarterly bath in a mild dog shampoo is sufficient unless mud-bathing habits require them to be hosed off more often.

Nails should be done weekly. You can acclimate your Dal to this process by giving a highly desirable treat per toe while you train them. A highly desirable treat would be a piece of hot dog, cheese, leftover chicken, etc. I grind my dog's nails with a cordless dremel tool with an emery wheel that can be purchased at any WalMart or hardware store, rather than cut them. Check ears weekly as well by smelling them. They should

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have no odor at all. A musky odor indicates a yeast infection which is pretty common. Get appropriate cleaner and medicated drops (I've had good luck with Conofite lotion) from your vet.

## Vaccinations

Your puppy will have been vaccinated at least once by me when you get him. I will provide a detailed health record for you to show your vet. I personally recommend vaccinating until at least 16 weeks of age, with annual vaccinations until 3 or 4, and then biennially. While the AVMA has cautioned against over vaccinating for the unknown impact it may have on the canine immune system, I've never experienced any observable adverse effects from vaccinations – but I have from failure to vaccinate until an age where you are assured maternal antibodies have worn off. This is particularly important if you plan to take your dogs to dog parks or other areas frequented by many dogs of unknown vaccination status. In that regard, do not take your puppy to any areas habituated by dogs until they are fully vaccinated. Worm every six months if your dog spends a lot of time rooting around in dirt. Give heartworm medication monthly year around, and I recommend the Frontline topical medication to effectively kill and fleas and ticks during that season.

## Socialization

The need to protect your puppy from exposure to potentially fatal viruses must be balanced against the need for comprehensive socialization during the period when they are most open to new experiences. Introduce them in a positive fashion to many different people, and if you can find friends with friendly dogs that don't frequent dog parks, have them come over for carefully monitored playtime. Another option is to find a "puppy kindergarten" class in your area. This can be done through a reputable obedience training facility or your local all breed kennel club (one can be found in your area by going to <http://www.AKC.org>). Training practices have undergone a profound change in the past decade. A puppy or a dog NEVER needs to be hit for a correction. If you need to brush up on your training skills or become acquainted with new ones, many new books and tapes can be ordered from [www.Dogwise.com](http://www.Dogwise.com). I recommend the basic video tapes called Sirius Puppy Training. I am always available for consultation on this or any other issue.