



Dalmatian Club of America

COMPILATION OF DALMATIAN FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Why are they known as “Firehouse Dogs”?

The Dalmatian breed is very old, with somewhat obscure origins, but Dals have always had a strong affinity with horses. When fire departments began, their fire wagons were horse-drawn. Dalmatians cleared the path for the horses to travel. At the fire, where there is always a lot of commotion and confusion, the Dalmatians would be there to help calm the horses and to be their mascots. Although horses are no longer seen in the modern firehouse, the Dalmatian may still be there.

2. Are Dalmatians a good breed for a family with children?

Dalmatians are a wonderful breed for a family with children. They are medium-sized, sturdy enough to tolerate children's horseplay, yet not so big as to be overpowering. As with any dog, small children need to be educated about their pets likes and dislikes, and the dog should be trained to have proper behavior, especially around small children. It is important to purchase your puppy from a reputable breeder who has socialized the puppies with children, teenagers, and adults.

3. Are Dalmatians easy to train?

Dalmatians are intelligent and strongly desire to please their owners. With positive reinforcement techniques and consistently setting limits for appropriate behavior, the Dalmatian quickly learns to be an excellent canine citizen. Training classes are highly recommended for any dog, helping the owner learn how to train their new dog.

4. Do Dalmatians tend to be “hyper”?

Properly bred and raised Dalmatians are usually not “hyper.” Dalmatians do have high energy levels, as they have historically been bred to trot all day with the horse and carriage. Dalmatians should have daily physical exercise to help maintain their health and happiness.

5. How many spots should a Dalmatian have?

No two Dalmatians are spotted identically, thus adding to their uniqueness. For a show Dalmatian the number of spots is not as important as their evenness of distribution. The AKC standard describes the ideal Dalmatian, preferring spots ranging in size from a dime to a half dollar, pleasingly and evenly distributed. An exceptionally heavily marked or sparsely marked Dalmatian may be less preferred in the show ring, but that in no way diminishes their value as a loving family companion.

6. Are liver Dalmatians rare? More valuable? More expensive?

Liver-spotted Dalmatians are less common than black spotted Dalmatians, as recessive genes cause the liver color. Liver Dalmatians are not more valuable nor more expensive, but they frequently attract lots of attention.

7. What health problems do Dalmatians have?

A well-bred Dalmatian is a generally healthy dog requiring little special care. Dalmatians do have a unique uric acid metabolism, with high levels of uric acid excretion in their urine, which can make kidney and bladder stone formation a possibility. By paying attention to the dog's diet and providing plentiful water, the knowledgeable owner can usually prevent serious problems. In the rare severe cases of stones, established medical treatments are available.

8. What about deafness in Dalmatians?

A small percentage of Dalmatians born are born deaf in both ears. Dalmatians who are deaf in only one ear make perfectly good pets, but are generally inappropriate for breeding. The hearing status of any Dalmatian puppy should be documented by BAER (Brainstem Auditory Evoked Response) testing, which is highly reliable and usually done in the puppy's second month of life.

9. How can I tell if a breeder is responsible?

The chances are, a responsible breeder will be a member of the Dalmatian Club of America, abiding by their code of ethics, and also be a member of a local Dalmatian Club or an all-breed dog club. The responsible breeder will supply detailed education and guidance about the breed, but will furthermore likely ask the prospective buyers many questions about the puppy's prospective home and family environment. The responsible breeder will have a written sales contract with a health guarantee, a four or five generation pedigree, and the shot and worming records of the pup. Of course, the litter should be AKC registered, and companion animals will usually have a limited registration or spay/neuter contract. Responsible breeders are very careful where they place their pups and keep in contact with the buyers for many years.

10. How can I find a responsible breeder near me?

The Dalmatian Club of America has a national breeder referral service that can be found on our web site at www.thedca.org or telephone 708/687-5447. The American Kennel Club also has a breeder referral program at their web site www.akc.org.

11. Why do responsible breeders require spay/neuter?

Responsible breeders require spaying or neutering of companion animals because they do not want to see the indiscriminate or uninformed breeding of Dalmatians, which could lead to a degradation of the breed's quality and reputation. Only the top quality show specimens should be considered for breeding, and the rest of the litter should be spayed or neutered. Spayed or neutered dogs make wonderful pets, and the owner never has to worry about a female coming in season or the male becoming an unintentional father.

12. What testing and evaluations should be done on puppies?

All reputable breeders will have done hearing testing of the puppies and both parents. The parents and ancestors also frequently have had general canine screening tests, such as OFA, CHIC, CERF, thyroid, etc. The breeder will have assessed the puppies' temperaments to best match each one to its future environment.

13. Should I expect or demand a written contract?

Yes, a written contract is expected of a responsible breeder. This includes the A bill of sale," the health guarantee, a statement about AKC papers, and any spay/neuter requirements.

14. Should I buy a dog from a pet shop?

No reputable breeder will sell puppies through a pet shop. Pet shops tend to get their dogs from puppy mills, which are large commercial breeding establishments which cannot possibly give the personal care to properly raise and socialize a litter and provide long-term guidance to every owner. Pet shop puppies should certainly be avoided.

15. Should Dalmatians be kept on a special diet?

Because of the Dalmatians high uric acid excretion, they should not have an excessive amount of protein in their diet. Commercial dog foods are usually well tolerated, but extra proteins, such as meat and table scraps, should be avoided.

16. Are older Dalmatians good to acquire?

Older Dalmatians can make wonderful pets. There may be a period of adjustment to a new home, but they quickly bond with their new owners and learn their new routines and environment. Acquiring an older Dal has the advantage of avoiding the sometimes-challenging puppy stages of chewing and housebreaking.

17. What is "Rescue" and is that a good way to get a Dalmatian?

Some Dalmatians who are no longer wanted by their owners become "Rescue" Dalmatians. Dedicated volunteers try to find a better home environment for the abandoned dog. While not

every "Rescue" dog is appropriate for every environment, and some dogs with severe health or temperament problems would not be suitable for any placement, "Rescue" provides a wonderful opportunity to acquire a loving Dalmatian who needs a better home.

18. How can I find out more about Dalmatians?

There are many books on Dalmatians, the foremost being "The Official Book of the Dalmatian" by the Dalmatian Club of America. The web site of the Dalmatian Club of America, www.thedca.org is full of valuable information about the Dalmatian and the Club. Go to a dog show in your area and meet the Dalmatian fanciers and breeders there. Feel free to ask questions and get to meet some of the Dals in person. The web site of the American Kennel Club www.akc.org also has a wide variety of canine information.

19. How can I purchase the DCA Dalmatian Book?

For more information about the book go to: [The Official Book of the Dalmatian.](#)

20. Other website links to information:

For Prospective Owners: <http://www.thedca.org/redbook.html>

For New Owners: <http://www.thedca.org/newowner.html>

This page has links to PDF's for Obedience, Agility and RoadTrial
<http://www.thedca.org/MemberEducation.html>

Health Information: <http://www.thedca.org/studygp.html>

Skin & Coat

<http://www.thedca.org/derm.pdf>

Eyes

<http://www.thedca.org/irisdysplasia.pdf>

<http://www.thedca.org/isd2.pdf>

<http://www.thedca.org/ocular.pdf>

<http://www.thedca.org/cerfbitch.pdf>

Hearing

<http://www.thedca.org/BAERprimer.pdf>

Urinary Stones

<http://www.thedca.org/emergency.pdf>

<http://www.thedca.org/genlprev.pdf>

Pamphlet on Stone Forming in Dalmatians:

<http://www.thedca.org/stonepamphlet.html>

Dalmatian Historical Information: <http://www.thedca.org/history.html>

Dalmatian Rescue Information and contacts: <http://www.thedca.org/rescue.html>

Listing of Regional Dalmatian clubs: <http://www.thedca.org/reg-club.html>

Membership Application Information: <http://www.thedca.org/membrshp.html>

Educational Resources:

Recommended Book List: <http://www.thedca.org/booklist.html>

Interactive CD ROM: <http://www.thedca.org/CDROM.html>

General Information Contact Listing: <http://www.thedca.org/resources.html>

The Illustrated Standard: <http://www.thedca.org/IS/Coverltr.html>

The Dalmatian Standard: <http://www.thedca.org/standard.html>