Our Basenji Sheba was diagnosed with Fanconi Syndrome in January of 1991. Considered to be afflicted quite early in her life, Sheba was only 4-1/2 years old when we discovered her Fanconi Syndrome via a monthly, routine urine glucose test with a strip of diabetic test tape held under her urine stream. The strip showed that she was spilling glucose (sugar) in her urine. We tested her further with a multivalent blood panel, which showed a normal blood glucose, a venous blood gas and a urinalysis—all confirming Fanconi Syndrome.

After picking ourselves up emotionally, we began to treat her to save her life according the protocol being outlined by Dr. Steve Gonto of Savannah, Georgia. We had read about this method of treatment in the Basenji Magazine. We did the tests every six months and successfully treated her for over ten years using this protocol until her death at the age of 14-1/2 in December of 2000.

Sheba used to drink at least a 2-quart stainless steel pail of water daily, and urinated most of it back out again throughout the day. Because of the sugary content of the urine, which is a good growing medium for bacteria, Fanconi dogs tend to get urinary tract infections more frequently than the other dogs. Some owners of Fanconi dogs have found that using Innova dry dog food as a base of their food-mix helps to stave off urinary tract infections. Innova has the probiotics found in yogurt in it, and I have speculated that this ingredient is what helps. See the Natura Pet web site for a local supplier. I also gave her some daily yogurt.

Sheba was on a high-protein diet with a number of supplements. Other than these things, Sheba acted quite normally, but urinated and drank a lot. She was an alert, healthy, playful dog. She lure cours ed a bit, and she just earned a CD (Companion Dog) obedience degree at the age of nine, getting the 4th highest Basenji scores in the country for 1995.

We faithfully did both of the two required tests every six to eight months: the multivalent blood panel and the venous blood gas, and we added a urinalysis if we thought she might have a urinary tract infection.

Fanconi dogs differ widely in their supplement needs, and whether the protocol works for your dog depends on your doing the testing and using the veterinary protocol from Dr. Steve Gonto correctly through your veterinarian. Fanconi Syndrome is fatal if not treated properly. If you or your veterinarian have any questions, e-mail Dr. Steve Gonto in Savannah, Georgia at <outdoc@aol.com> or call him at (912) 598-5067.

Here is what it was like treating our Fanconi dog. I have written this so that some of you might have an idea of what to expect if your dog is diagnosed with Fanconi Syndrome.

**Typical Supplements For Fanconi-Afflicted Dogs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supplement</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Approx. Price</th>
<th>Sources (U.S.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sodium bicarbonate</td>
<td>10-grain</td>
<td>0 to 30 tablets daily</td>
<td>Approx. $17/1000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I feed all my dogs a combination of Innova dry food, a heaping tablespoon of high-protein dog food like Triumph and 1 tablespoon of canned pumpkin for fiber. To that I add a pinch of Asmira Super C 2000 per dog (calcium ascorbate—a potent and highly absorbable form of vitamin C. (See supplier 4); 1 Pet-Tabs Plus F/A (for vitamins and fatty acids) and leftover raw or cooked veggies likes carrots or broccoli on top. All of my dogs, including Sheba, have had very glossy coats, appear to be quite healthy and wolf down their food. I mixed one teaspoon of powdered dicalcium phosphate each of Sheba’s meals for calcium/phosphorus.

Getting Sodium Bicarbonate And Potassium Pills Into Them

I have used Velveeta cheese, which is the consistency of child’s Play Dough; cat food “meat balls;” bread balls squished around the pills and dipped in gravy or any other tasty thing; and chilled baby food meat served off a spoon with the pills pushed into it with excellent success. There is a separate list of foods compiled from what folks on the Fanconidogs e-mail support group have used to “pill” their Fanconi-afflicted dogs. This list is also in the Health & Safety section of the Basenji Companions’ web site.

Be sure not to touch the outside of the balls with fingers which have handled the sodium bicarbonate. Bicarbonate is very bitter, and most dogs will turn up their nose at it if they
even get a sniff of it. Most dogs swallow the food balls whole, like oysters. I fed Sheba three times/day, because got so many pills (21 sodium bicarbonate/day at her highest level, and 6 “people” potassium/day, plus her vitamins and Amino Fuel). I fixed all of her pills in the morning and put them in baggies for the rest of the day. Her mealtimes were three times a day at about 7 to 8 a.m., 6 p.m., and 11 p.m.

**Getting Pet-Cal and Pet-Tabs Into Them**

Some dogs like the taste of Pet-Cal and Pet-Tab pills and will eat them as treats. If they don’t, these are the only pills that also can be crushed and added to the wet/dry food mix. (I used the dicalcium phosphate powder instead of Pet-Cal, so I didn’t have to bother with crushing pills.)

**Water**

We kept a stainless-steel 2-quart bucket with a bail on it (like a child’s sand pail, only stainless steel) hanging in Sheba’s crate at all times by a metal S-hook. S-hooks are found in most good hardware stores. Stainless pails can be purchased at dog shows or from supplier #2 for about $12.

**Urination**

Whenever Sheba started having accidents in the house, it was usually because she was developing a urinary tract infection, which tends to impart great urgency to a dog’s need to urinate. Sheba normally did not have accidents if we let her out several times a day. For severe leaking problems, you might consider investing in a Doggie Door opening into a dog run. She never had another urinary tract infection once I started giving her Innova dog food and yogurt.

She slept in her crate at night (I use a roomy “400 Veri-Kennel size” open-wire crate for all my dogs) with two large fuzzies. She made herself a nest in on of the fuzzies, and she learned to have any “accidents” on the other fuzzie, and we would clean out her crate every morning. I have also used “incontinence pads,” made by putting several layers of newspaper in a pillow case.

We loved Sheba the same as any of the dogs in our four-legged family, and we were grateful for her life. No living being, four-legged, or two-legged, is without some ailment or other at some time in their lives—health issues are a fact of life. These little “furkids” are no exception, and I feel that they deserve our care the same way that we would treat our hypertensive, incontinent grandmother or diabetic sister who need pills, monitoring, testing—and loving.

**Sources**

1. Call several drug stores and ask if they can get URL brand 10-grain sodium bicarbonate or a equivalent product at approximately the same cost from their suppliers. Some “name brands” cost 4 times as much! 10 grain sodium bicarbonate tablets also available at America RX.
2. Your veterinarian sells Pet-Cal, and Pet-Tabs, but you can also get them from catalogs like Petedge or Foster & Smith, 1-800-826-7206 who also carry Pet-Tabs Plus F/A granules. Metal pails can be purchased from these catalogs, as well.
3. Glyndon Valley Health Products, 226 Business Center Dr., Reisterstown, MD 21136, 1-800-521-0010. They will take mail orders on a credit card. Ester C powder also available at Purely Pets.
4. Go to any horse tack store and have them order "Dicalcium Phosphate" powder (for horses). This is formulated by Horse Health Products, a division of Farnum Industries. Dicalcium Phosphate is also available at PetVet Supply.
5. Your local CVS, Wal-Mart, some grocery stores or any drug store should carry these potassium pills and Centrum vitamins.
6. General Nutrition or any health food store in the section for bodybuilding supplements will carry Amino Fuel. Some internet health food stores will also carry this.
7. High-protein dog foods may be found at better pet supply stores. Innova dog food: Natura Pet Products, P.O. Box 271, Santa Clara, California, USA 95052, telephone 1-408-261-0770 or 1-800-532-7261. See http://www.naturapet.com for local supplier.