

Why worry about DENTAL DISEASE in your pet?

Did you Know? PETS NEED DENTAL CARE

- According to the American Veterinary Dental Society, by the age of 3, 80% of dogs and 70% of cats have some degree of periodontal disease.
- “Dental disease, specifically periodontal disease, is the most common ailment affecting pet dogs and cats.” (Dr. William Rosenblad, DVM)
- Dental disease can significantly shorten an animal’s life - heart, kidney and liver disease can occur all because of bad teeth.
- Brushing daily or at least every other day will decrease plaque build-up. Weekly brushing will NOT.
- “Doggy breath” is NOT normal - it is an indication of some degree of dental disease.
- Though animals may not show it, dental disease is PAINFUL!
- Prevention is KEY - Yearly dental cleanings, daily brushings, rawhides, chew toys, all can significantly reduce dental disease.



SIGNS of Dental Disease

- Foul, bad breath.
- Drooling, excessive salivation.
- Declining crunchy treats, reduced appetite.
- Weight loss.
- Appearance of tartar on the teeth.
- Discolored, broken or fractured teeth.
- Vomiting undigested or poorly chewed food.
- Pawing or rubbing at the face.
- “Chattering” teeth - especially in cats.
- Chewing less or on one side of the mouth.
- Playing less with chew toys.
- Aggressive when face or mouth is touched.

STAGES of Dental Disease



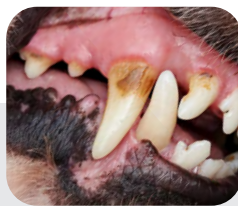
**Stage 0 -
HEALTHY**

Teeth are white, free of plaque build-up. No fractures, cracks, chips or holes. Gums should be pink and firmly attached around the teeth. No redness around gum line.



**Stage 1 -
EARLY GINGIVITIS**
(Reversible at this stage)

Build-up of bacteria on tooth's surface, causing plaque. Formation of plaque leads to gum inflammation called gingivitis. Will see some redness at gum line.



**Stage 2 -
ADVANCED GINGIVITIS**
(Possibly reversible)

As more plaque accumulates, mineralizes into tartar. Advanced inflammation at gum line causes recession and infection. May have some bleeding when gums are probed. Infection causes bad breath.



**Stage 3 -
EARLY PERIODONTAL
DISEASE**

Continuation of tartar formation causing excessive gum recession, exposing unprotected areas of the teeth to infection. Destruction of the periodontal ligament, with some bone loss. Teeth may become mobile.



**Stage 4 -
ADVANCED
PERIODONTAL DISEASE**

Advanced gum recession and infection causing deep pockets around teeth and severe bone loss. May see abscessed teeth, pus and tooth loss. Behavioral changes due to pain is common.

3 ANNUAL EXAMS

Routine physical exams and professional dental cleanings performed by veterinarians, play a vital role in ensuring oral health. It is important to note that while many places advertise dental cleanings, only those that can offer full service anesthetic cleaning and scaling, with dental x-rays, can truly benefit your pet. General anesthesia is the only way to adequately perform a complete oral health assessment and treatment (COHAT). This typically includes:

- Thorough scaling and removal of tartar on all teeth, specifically up under the gum line.
- Examining gingival attachments to determine gingivitis, gum recession and inflammation.
- Probing for cavities, fractures, bone loss and overall periodontal disease.
- Possible x-rays or extractions.
- Intubated, to protect airway from water and plaque.
- Polishing the enamel.

Regular cleaning of this type will help your vet detect early periodontal disease and mean that the procedure is relative quick, safe and effective. Unfortunately many owners wait until more advanced stages of the disease, meaning the process may require more extensive care.



Happy Teeth Helps Make for Happy Pets!

Prevention & Helpful Tips

Dental disease may not be completely avoidable, but its severity can be. Owners can reduce the risk of oral disease significantly by following some simple tips:

1 REGULAR BRUSHING

The gold standard would be to “brush” your pet’s teeth daily with specially formulated toothpaste. Plaque starts accumulating 12 - 24 hours after brushing. This means that like people, pets teeth need to be brushed daily to prevent this build-up. With time and patience many animals will tolerate daily brushing and some even learn to enjoy the experience.

2 PROVIDING ITEMS TO CHEWS

If brushing is just not an option the next best thing is to provide your pet with items to chew. Chewing and gnawing on specialized toys and treats on a regular bases, is another affective way of reducing tartar build-up. It is best to only give treats and toys that are specifically made for dental health as some items can cause fractures and broken teeth. Examples of good chew treats include:

- ✓ C.E.T. Chews
- ✓ Friskies Cheweez Beef hide Treats
- ✓ Hartz Dental Flavor Infused Chews
- ✓ Feline and Canine Greenies
- ✓ Vetrudent Dog Chews



Visit Veterinary Oral Health Council website to review acceptable products that help with dental disease: http://www.vohc.org/accepted_products.htm

Chew toys that should be avoided because they can cause tooth fractures and oral damage include:

- ✗ Nylon bones
- ✗ Tennis balls
- ✗ Cow hooves
- ✗ Sticks