

# Pawsitive Press

**INSIDE THIS  
ISSUE:**

Dental Month	1
Coupons	3

**Related Webpages:**

## Dental Month

**By: Katherine Restrepo, D.V.M.**

The month of February in the veterinary field is dedicated to National Pet Dental Health Month. As a veterinarian, I often times have clients who bring their pets to an appointment because their pet's breath smells poorly. Typically, once your pet has bad breath, it means they already have periodontal disease, a disease to the gums caused by plaque buildup and bacteria. Periodontal disease, if left untreated, can lead to decaying teeth that need to be removed and subsequently to secondary diseases.



As with most health problems, it is best to stay ahead of the game for the best chances of preventing disease. The best oral health, begins with daily dental care. A healthy oral cavity can add years to our pet's life, which is what we all wish for right?



Below are tips for daily dental care to ensure our pet's oral health is optimal.

**Brushing teeth:** Make sure to use a veterinary approved pet toothpaste as human tooth paste can be harmful for pets. Brushing our pet's teeth daily is best for oral health. Brushing teeth may be a challenge for some people, therefore it is important to start as puppies/kittens. If that was not an option, you may try using a finger tooth brush. Some pets may allow a finger tooth brush more than a regular tooth brush. When brushing the teeth, the most important teeth to focus on are the teeth in the back of the mouth, as they obtain the most tartar buildup. If you feel your

pet may bite you, do not attempt to brush the teeth, below are other options.



**Dental Chews:** Dental chews with the Veterinary Oral Health Council (VOHC) seal on the packaging are great for controlling plaque buildup. Always make sure you are monitoring your pet with any chews especially if your pet is one to eat the entire chew whole.

**Water additives:** Water additives are tasteless solution that you put into the water. The way they work, is by freshening the breath and killing plaque building bacteria in your pets mouth.



**Dental Cleaning:** Despite everything we do at home, some pets can still have excessive tartar buildup and require a dental cleaning. When a dental cleaning is performed, pets are put under anesthesia for a complete assessment of the oral cavity. The teeth are scaled and polished to remove tartar buildup. Then they get full mouth dental radiographs. This is to assess the health of the tooth below the gum line. Removal of the tooth may be warranted if the tooth appears to be diseased. A diseased tooth can be very painful for our pets and we may not even notice it until after the tooth is removed. Many times I have clients who tell me that their pet is now a new pet after removal of painful teeth.

February is National Pet Dental Health Month, but oral health is important every month. Schedule an appointment to have your pet's oral cavity assessed.

## 85% OF ADULT PETS HAVE PERIODONTAL DISEASE.



Could your pet be at risk?

Imagine what would happen if you didn't routinely care for your teeth in between dental cleanings. The same basics of dental care are true for your pet, too. Without routine care, your pet could suffer from increasingly serious stages of periodontal disease.

Canine

Feline

**In Stage 1, Gingivitis**, the gum (or gingiva) at the top of teeth is inflamed and swollen, and plaque covers the teeth. Treatment can reverse the condition.



**In Stage 2, Early Periodontitis**, the entire attached gum is inflamed and swollen. The pet's mouth is painful, and bad breath is noticeable. Professional treatment and home dental care can prevent this from becoming irreversible.



**In Stage 3, Moderate Periodontitis**, infection and calculus are destroying the gum, now bright red and bleeding. The pet's mouth is sore, which can affect eating and behavior. Bad breath is consistent. Periodontitis has started and may be irreversible.



**In Stage 4, Advanced Periodontitis**, chronic bacterial infection is destroying the gum, teeth and bone. Bacteria may be spreading in the bloodstream throughout the body, which can damage the kidneys, liver and heart.



**Periodontal disease is the most common disease in dogs and cats. The good news is it's simple and easy to prevent.**

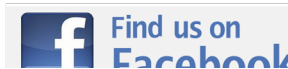


Photos courtesy of Jan Bellows, DVM, PA, DAVDC, DABVP

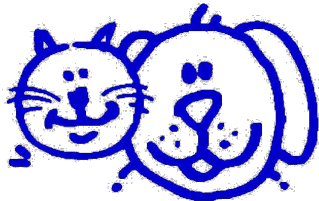
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Discount applies to anesthesia, prophylaxis, and any other dental radiographs or extractions that might be needed. Offer excludes required pre-dental labwork. May not be combined with any other coupons or discounts. Must be presented at the time of purchase.

**Expires: 2/28/23 NL**



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**-\$40**

**\$40 off Complete Canine and Feline Wellness Screens**

Wellness Screen includes the following: Chemistry, CBC, Heartworm Test, Thyroid Level, Urinalysis, and Microalbuminuria (for cats a Leukemia and FIV tests are also included). Call the office to schedule your pets visit today! May not be combined with any other offer. Coupon must be presented at the time for purchase.

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