

Pawsitive Press

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Dental Disease

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Eighty-five percent of all pets have some degree of dental disease by the time they are three years old. Early signs of dental disease include bad breath, drooling, red gums and brown-gold tartar build up on the teeth. However, dental disease is not just a cosmetic issue, it is also an overall health problem. Bacteria under the gumline can easily travel via the bloodstream to the heart, kidneys, and liver causing disease elsewhere in the body. Professional dental cleanings are an essential step to help prevent dental disease in our pets.



During a professional dental cleaning pets are under anesthesia for a brief period of time so that the tartar can not only be scaled from the visible



surfaces of the teeth but also from below the gumline, behind the teeth and from pockets between the teeth. In addition to the teeth, the health of the entire mouth (tongue, gums, and lips) is assessed. A thorough dental cleaning can be accomplished only while the pet is under general anesthesia. This is an important distinction from “non-anesthetic” dental cleanings that are only able to clean tartar from the visible surfaces, not where it actually causes periodontal disease. After the tartar is cleared away the gums are checked for pockets which indicate bone loss and periodontal disease. Dental x-rays are used to determine the state of the bone and tooth below the gumline. Sometimes teeth need to be extracted due to infection, substantial bone loss or breaks within the tooth. After the teeth are assessed, they are polished to help seal any

fine scratches in the enamel.



Home care is also very important and while it will not prevent a pet from needing yearly professional dental cleanings it can help preserve dental health. The best at-home treatment is daily tooth brushing with a pet-approved toothpaste. It's important to not use human toothpaste since some can contain chemicals that are toxic to our pets (such as the artificial sugar xylitol). Dental chews like Oravet and Greenies are also beneficial but do not replace brushing. Oral barrier gels such as Oratene can help decrease the bacterial load on the teeth.

Please contact us if you have any questions about your pet's dental health!



Stages of Periodontal Disease in Cats and Dogs

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

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.

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.

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.

Canine



Feline



Canine Dental Cleaning



Feline Dental Cleaning



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