

Dental care for your pet



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Dogs and cats need dental care too! Even with the best of home care, teeth need to be checked regularly – and some pets will need their teeth scaled and cleaned on a regular basis.

Untreated dental disease results in infection and discomfort in the mouth and may lead to serious health problems.

All pets start out with clean, shiny teeth but, unfortunately, many do not stay that way. It's easy enough to forget to check your pet's mouth and, before you realise, dental disease may have advanced to the point where tooth loss is unavoidable.

Over time, debris from food mixes with saliva and oral bacteria to create a thickening layer of tartar, which sticks to the teeth and creeps below the gum line to erode the sockets of the teeth. Bacteria can also enter an animal's bloodstream and may in turn result in serious problems elsewhere in the body.

How to prevent this?

There are many things you can do to make sure that your pet maintains healthy teeth and gums.

Check your pet's teeth regularly (including the back teeth)

Normal healthy teeth should be clean and white. A yellow discolouration of the teeth indicates tartar build-up and should not be ignored for too long. Redness of the gums, a thick build-up of tartar and bad breath all indicate more advanced disease and mean it's time to see a vet as soon as possible.

Give food that will help the teeth stay clean

Prescription dry food diets are available at our clinic that are specially formulated to help clean the teeth as your pet eats. They are very palatable; however, they do come with a full money back guarantee if your pet will not eat them. Raw meat fed to cats in large chunks will force your pet to chew.

Raw bones

Bones are best given to your pet under supervision. Large soft bones such as brisket or shank bones are good for dogs, while raw chicken necks and wings are suitable for cats and small dogs under 5 kg. Do not cook them and avoid large hard bones, which can sometimes split the teeth. Chewing through bones and cartilage, and tearing the meat off the bone, exercises and cleans the entire tooth right up to the gum line.

Artificial chews and bones

Products such as Greenies, rawhide and pigs ears are healthy choices.

Tooth brushing

This is best done with special enzymatic dog or cat toothpaste. The toothpaste is used with a very soft dog or cat toothbrush or finger brush. Do not use human toothpaste. Toothpaste for dogs and cats does not need to be rinsed and is pleasantly flavoured.

Dental gels

These help prevent plaque build-up and are applied to the gums with a finger brush or your finger.

Aquadent

This product is added to drinking water and freshens breath and maintains good oral hygiene – without an unpleasant taste.