

## What is Dental Disease?

Most oral health problems usually begin with a build up of plaque which, if left untreated, hardens to form unsightly tartar. In some cases severe dental disease can develop and lead to tooth loss.

Infection associated with dental disease is responsible for bad breath and bacteria can enter a pet's blood stream and spread to the vital organs, eg: heart, liver or kidneys, causing disease in these parts of the body.

Research shows that at around the age of two, 80% of dogs and 70% of cats have some sign of dental disease, most of which can be successfully treated without the loss of teeth if veterinary advice is sought early in the disease process.

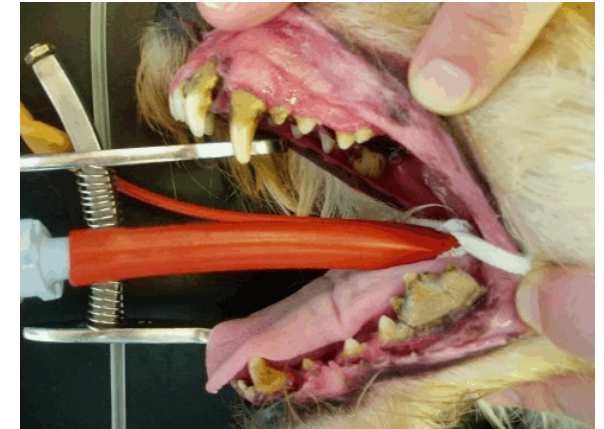
## Symptoms of Dental Disease:

- Bad breath (halitosis)
- Build up of yellow/brown tartar
- Reddened or bleeding gums
- Change of chewing or eating habits
- Pain when eating or pawing at the mouth
- Subdued behaviour
- Tooth loss
- Dribbling saliva

## Factors Contributing to Dental Problems

- **Poor Oral Hygiene:**  
Accumulation of plaque and tartar can lead to gingivitis and periodontal disease without the proper preventative care.
- **Food:**  
Rapid accumulation of plaque occurs when feeding a soft, sticky food.
- **Age:**  
Dental disease occurs more commonly in the older pet.
- **Breed:**  
The smaller breeds of dog often have a problem with overcrowded or misaligned teeth which predisposes to periodontal disease. Also certain cats (eg: Abyssinian and Somali) may be more susceptible to periodontal disease.

## Canine Periodontal Disease



## Canine Healthy Mouth



## Clinic Nurse

Please make an appointment with our clinic nurse if you wish to discuss your pet's oral care further.

## How to Brush Your Pet's Teeth

You will need a toothbrush, preferably one designed for pets, and a pet toothpaste. Most animals accept brushing very well if they are introduced to the procedure in a calm and patient way. The best way is as follows:

- **Day 1:**  
Gently pat and scratch the muzzle, slowly lifting the lip for about 30 seconds. Reward with praise and a treat at the end of the session.
- **Day 2:**  
Repeat as above and also gently run your finger or a finger toothbrush and a small amount of toothpaste over your pet's teeth for 30 to 45 seconds. Reward with a treat and praise.
- **Day 3:**  
Repeat Day 2, adding 15 seconds' time to running your finger or finger toothbrush over your pet's teeth. Always reward with praise and a treat.
- **Day 4:**  
If all is going well, run your finger over the teeth for 30 seconds and then gently insert the toothbrush and again run over the teeth for 30 seconds.
- **Day 5:**  
Repeat as Day 4 and increase the time by 20 seconds.
- **Day 6:**  
Repeat as Day 5 and gently rub your pet's teeth.
- **Day 7:**  
You know your pet best of all. If you feel that it is accepting the brushing well, gradually increase the brushing time until you are able to spend at least one minute on each side of the mouth.

**Make it fun!**



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## Quick Reference Guide



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