

Oral Health and Your Pet's Well Being

Does your pet have:

- Bad breath
- Bleeding gums
- Drool
- Tooth Loss
- Lethargy
- Build up of yellow/brown tartar
- Pain when eating
- Change in eating habits
- Pawing at the mouth

Any or all of these signs can be a sign of dental disease. Oral care can not only help with your pet's bad breath, but can have an effect on their general health, including their heart, liver and kidneys.

Plaque is a colorless film that contains large amounts of bacteria. If this is left alone, then it hardens into tartar that begins to form next to the gum line and tooth surface. This will cause inflammation of the gums (gingivitis) and it can be painful. After an even longer period of time, there can be irreversible separation of the gum tissue from the tooth. Once you see this, there is loss of the ligament support of the tooth, which may lead to the loss of the tooth.

There are many products available to help you keep your pet's teeth in good condition. After an examination of the teeth and gums, sometimes a professional cleaning is necessary. This entails peri-operative antibiotics, general anesthesia and ultrasonic scaling of the teeth with a professional polish of the enamel surface. Sometimes radiographs are necessary to evaluate the roots of the teeth. Once this is done, and hopefully before your pet ever needs a professional dental, you can brush your pet's teeth at home.

To start, you may just have to get your pet used to having his mouth dealt with. We will be happy to show you how to do that. There is toothpaste specifically formulated for dogs and cats. They come in different flavors and most pets tolerate them very well. Finger toothbrushes and regular pet toothbrushes are available. Brushing should be done daily to help ensure proper dental hygiene.

There is a newer product out that is easy to use and smells good. It is DentAcetic! They are finger wipes that contain acetic acid and sodium hexametaphosphate (HMP). The uneven surface of the wipe, along with the acetic acid, whiten the teeth. Both the acetic acid and HMP bind minerals which inhibit plaque turning into tartar. The flavoring of cinnamon-clove combine to deodorize the breath and the clove has the additive affect of relieving the pain associated with sore gums.

Along with the DentAcetic Wipes, we recommend foods that are specially formulated for oral care (Science diet T/D and oral care). The patented kibble is formulated to work like a toothbrush to clean the teeth and freshen the breath as your pet chews. The fibers are aligned so the kibble will stay in contact with the teeth until it hits the gum line, which scrubs away plaque and strengthens the gums.

Oral hygiene is extremely important for your pet's overall health. A well-balanced diet along with daily cleansing of the teeth and possibly professional teeth cleaning can help.