



SITS & WIGGLES

The Newsletter of the Animal Clinic of Chardon

WHAT'S INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Pet Oral Health

Causes of pet dental problems

What is veterinary dentistry, and who should perform it?

Why does dentistry require anesthesia?

What can I do at home for my pet's oral health?



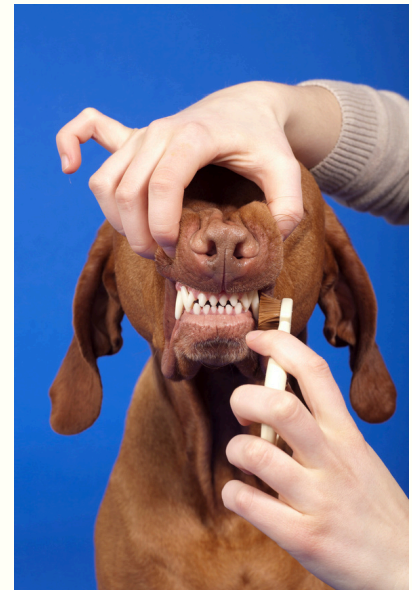
PET ORAL HEALTH CARE

Oral health is a very important part of your pet's overall health, and dental problems can cause, or be caused by, other health problems.

Your pet's teeth and gums should be checked at least once a year by your veterinarian for early signs of problems and to keep your pet's mouth healthy.

Have your pet's teeth checked sooner if you observe any of the following problems:

- Bad breath
- Broken or loose teeth
- Extra teeth or retained baby teeth
- Teeth that are discolored or covered in tartar
- Abnormal chewing, drooling, or dropping food from the mouth
- Reduced appetite or refusal to eat
- Pain in or around the mouth
- Bleeding from the mouth
- Swelling in the areas surrounding the mouth



Some pets become irritable when they have dental problems, and any changes in your pet's behavior should prompt a visit to your veterinarian. Always be careful when evaluating your pet's mouth, because a painful animal may bite.

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PET ORAL HEALTH CARE (CONTINUED)

Causes of pet dental problems

Although cavities are less common in pets than in people, they can have many of the same dental problems that people can develop:

- Broken teeth and roots
- Periodontal disease
- Abscesses or infected teeth
- Cysts or tumors in the mouth
- Malocclusion, or misalignment of the teeth and bite
- Broken (fractured) jaw
- Palate defects (such as cleft palate)



Periodontal disease is the most common dental condition in dogs and cats – by the time your pet is 3 years old, he or she will very likely have some early evidence of periodontal disease, which will worsen as your pet grows older if effective preventive measures aren't taken. Early detection and treatment are critical, because advanced periodontal disease can cause severe problems and pain for your pet. Periodontal disease doesn't just affect your pet's mouth. Other health problems found in association with periodontal disease include kidney, liver, and heart muscle changes.

It starts with plaque that hardens into tartar. Tartar above the gumline can often easily be seen and removed, but plaque and tartar below the gumline is damaging and sets the stage for infection and damage to the jawbone and the tissues that connect the tooth to the jaw bone. Periodontal disease is graded on a scale of 0 (normal) to 4 (severe).

The treatment of periodontal disease involves a thorough dental cleaning and x-rays may be needed to determine the severity of the disease. Your veterinarian or a board-certified veterinary dentist will make recommendations based on your pet's overall health and the health of your pet's teeth, and provide you with options to consider.

What is veterinary dentistry, and who should perform it?

Veterinary dentistry includes the cleaning, adjustment, filing, extraction, or repair of your pets' teeth and all other aspects of oral health care. These procedures should be performed by a veterinarian or a board-certified veterinary dentist. Subject to state or provincial regulation, veterinary technicians are allowed to perform certain dental procedures under the supervision of a veterinarian.

The process begins with an oral exam of your pet's mouth by a veterinarian. Radiographs (x-rays) may be needed to evaluate the health of the jaw and the tooth roots below the gumline. Because most dental disease occurs below the gumline, where you can't see it, a thorough dental cleaning and evaluation are performed under anesthesia. Dental cleaning includes scaling (to remove dental plaque and tartar) and polishing, similar to the process used on your own teeth during your regular dental cleanings.

Why does dentistry require anesthesia?

When you go to the dentist, you know that what's being done is meant to help you and keep your mouth healthy. Your dentist uses techniques to minimize pain and discomfort and can ask you how you are feeling, so you accept the procedures and do your best to keep still. Your pet does not understand the benefit of dental procedures, and he or she reacts by moving, trying to escape, or even biting.

Anesthesia makes it possible to perform the dental procedures with less stress and pain for your pet. In addition, anesthesia allows for a better cleaning because your pet is not moving around and risking injury from the dental equipment. If radiographs (x-rays) are needed, your pet needs to be very still in order to get good images, and this is unlikely without heavy sedation or anesthesia.

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PET ORAL HEALTH CARE (CONTINUED)

What can I do at home for my pet's oral health?

Prevention of the most common oral disease in pets consists of frequent removal of the dental plaque and tartar that forms on teeth that are not kept clean. Regularly brushing your pet's teeth is the single most effective thing you can do to keep their teeth healthy between dental cleanings, and may reduce the frequency or even eliminate the need for periodic dental cleaning by your veterinarian. Daily brushing is best, but it's not always possible and brushing several times a week can be effective. Most dogs accept brushing, but cats can be a bit more resistant patience and training are important.

There are many pet products marketed with claims that they improve dental health, but not all of them are effective. Talk with your veterinarian about any dental products, treats, or dental-specific diets you're considering for your pet, or ask your veterinarian for their recommendation.



February Oral Health Awareness Month Special

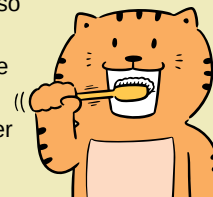
Throughout the month of February, schedule an Comprehensive Oral Health Assessment and Treatment Plan to be performed before June 1st and get two valuable bonuses!

Upon completion of the Oral Health Assessment, you will receive:

- 5 extra loyalty stamps (this is in addition to the stamps earned for the procedure).
- A coupon for a free Intestinal Parasite Screening.
- Together they are over \$80 in value!

Comprehensive Oral Health Assessments for Your Pet

Our oral health assessments cover all the bases, starting with a full tartar scaling and polishing above and below the gum line. We also perform full mouth dental radiographs and a thorough oral examination to detect any potential oral health issues. To ensure your pet's safety during the procedure, they will be under full anesthesia with IV fluids and vital signs monitoring. If we discover any teeth that require oral surgery, we will provide a detailed treatment plan and cost estimate at the time of the procedure. Furthermore, we run a full lab work panel to ensure your pet has healthy organ function while under anesthesia.



Unsure if your furry friend needs an oral health assessment and treatment plan? Book a free exam with one of our skilled nurses to evaluate your pet's levels of tartar and gingivitis. If a comprehensive oral health assessment and treatment plan is required, our nurse will help you schedule it.

You cannot share your life with a dog, as I had done in Bournemouth, or a cat, and not know perfectly well that animals have personalities and minds and feelings.

Jane Goodall

ACOC Birthdays

No birthdays this month

