

Your pet looks to you for dental care

Pets can't brush their teeth, but just like people, dogs and cats are at risk for dental problems that can cause pain and serious health issues. Your pet is counting on you for dental care to stay healthy and happy.

Causes of periodontal disease

Periodontal disease is caused by an accumulation of plaque. Plaque is a colour-less film that contains large amounts of potentially harmful bacteria. If left unchecked, built-up plaque can create infection, destroying your pet's gums and the tissue and bone that support the teeth. Preventive oral care can reduce plaque and help maintain proper oral health.

Signs of periodontal disease

Schedule an appointment with your veterinarian if your pet shows any of these warning signs:

- Bad breath
- Yellow-brown crust on teeth
- Red or bleeding gums
- Change in chewing or eating habits
- Tooth loss
- Change in behaviour
- Abnormal drooling

Contributing factors

Poor oral hygiene

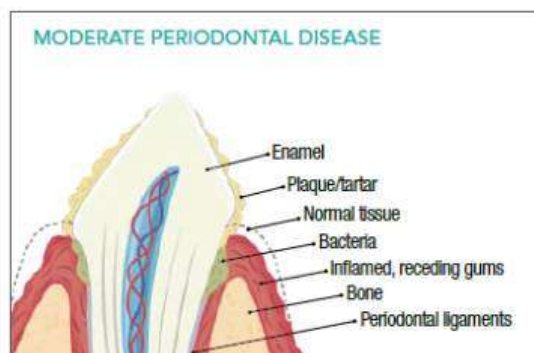
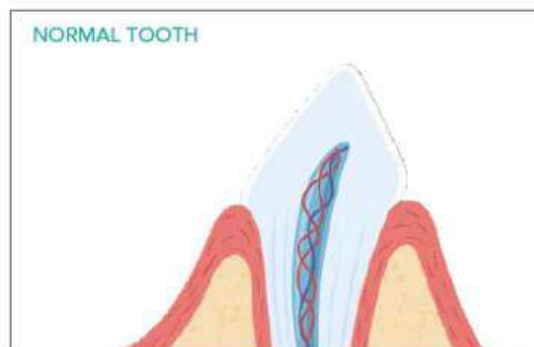
Ignoring the condition of your pet's mouth can lead to periodontal disease, tooth loss and other serious health problems.

Breed

Periodontal disease is more common in smaller breeds of dogs and certain breeds of cats.

Age

Periodontal disease is more common as pets grow older.



Healthy Mouth, Healthy Body

Proper oral care isn't just good for the mouth – it's good for the whole body, too. Poor dental health, on the other hand, can put your pet's systemic health at risk.

- Plaque builds up on a pet's teeth
- Bacteria in the plaque irritate the pet's gums
- The irritated gums bleed, allowing bacteria from the plaque to enter the bloodstream
- Bacteria in the bloodstream travel throughout the body, and can negatively impact vital organs

Emerging science suggests a strong link between good oral health and heart health. Pets with poorly maintained teeth and gums also run the risk of experiencing several other serious health problems:

- Painful dental infections
- Tooth loss
- A taxed immune system, which limits a pet's ability to fight disease and infection

Your veterinarian is your pet's dentist

Just as people should have regular checkups by their dentists, your pet needs regular dental care by your veterinarian.

Dental exams

Every regular exam in our clinic includes a thorough dental exam. We'll also recommend a home care plan to help you keep your pet healthy. If we find disease, we will recommend a treatment plan.

Professional dental cleaning

Part of your pet's treatment plan may include a professional dental cleaning under carefully monitored anesthesia. We'll provide antibiotics and pain medication for your pet as needed.

Dental x-rays

Only a portion of a tooth is visible above the gumline. Dental X-rays show us what we can't see — the tooth's structure below the gums and the bone that anchors it.

Home dental care

Keeping watch

Home dental care includes monitoring your pet for changes in behavior and inspecting your pet's mouth regularly. We can show you what to look for.

Tooth brushing

You may find it difficult to imagine brushing your pet's teeth, but daily brushing is the very best way to help your pet avoid dental disease. Ask us to show you how to brush your pet's teeth.

Feeding for a healthy mouth

Brushing may be difficult, but using a pet food specially formulated to clean teeth, such as Hill's® Prescription Diet® t/d® pet food, makes effective home dental care as easy as feeding your pet. Ask us about the dental pet food options available for your pet.

Tips on brushing your pet's teeth

- Introduce a brushing program gradually and early; training may take several days or weeks.
- At first, dip your finger into beef bouillon for a dog or tuna water for a cat, and rub your finger over the pet's mouth and teeth.
- Make these initial sessions brief and positive.
- Introduce gauze on your finger with the same beef or tuna flavor and begin rubbing the teeth in a circular motion.
- Before graduating to a soft-bristle toothbrush, put a small amount of toothpaste specifically designed for pets on your finger and allow the pet to taste it.
- Finally, apply a small dab of pet toothpaste on a moist toothbrush and allow your pet to lick the bristles. Begin brushing gently at a 45° angle away from the gumline.
- Please note: Toothpaste designed for people contains ingredients that may upset your pet's stomach.

Did you know?

Dental disease doesn't just affect the mouth

There are several ways it can interfere with your pet's overall health and quality of life.

Dental disease can lead to problems in the heart, liver, kidneys or other organs. Plaque is a colorless film containing large amounts of bacteria that builds up on your pet's teeth. Plaque can cause infection, destroying gums, bone and other tissues that support the teeth. Your pet's mouth may develop small wounds that allow the bacteria to enter the bloodstream and spread throughout the body.

What it means when your pet picks up a kibble and then drops it

Some pets play with their food and may drop it while eating. Other pets with dental disease drop food because they find it difficult or painful to chew. If your pet drops food and you're unsure why, consult your veterinarian.

Schedule regular dental checkups

We monitor the progress of your pet's preventive program, so regular dental checkups are essential, just as twice-a-year checkups are important for people. For pets that form tartar quickly or those with a history of oral problems, frequent examinations and cleanings may be advised.

Don't risk dental disease, tooth loss and other serious health problems by ignoring your pet's mouth. **Call us to schedule a dental exam today.**