

Dental Disease in Your Pet

- Unlike us, Pets don't brush or floss their teeth daily. Plaque and tarter accumulates on the tooth surface and sticks like cement, which **cannot be removed by normal brushing**.
- Tarter and plaque hold **bacteria** which is the cause of the malodorous (**smelly/ unpleasant**) breath, and leads to gingivitis (which is an infection of the gums the causes swelling, redness and sometimes bleeding at the gum line)
- Gum infection leads to:
 - Tooth and bone decay which eventually leads to **tooth loss**.
 - **Increased cost and pain** of extractions.
 - Localized pain that may or may not cause difficulty chewing
 - This is the tooth ache equivalent to us, however our pets can't tell you it hurts
 - Constant bacteria shedding in the bloodstream of your pet.
 - This has been shown to **cause diseases in other organs** such as the liver, kidneys and heart valves.

Prevention of Periodontal Disease

(Disease of gums and teeth)

- To **prevent** accumulation of tarter/plaque:
 - Daily teeth brushing with animal toothpaste.
 - Human toothpaste has baking soda that could upset your pet's stomach.
 - Veterinary approved dental chews.
 - Example: CET brand Chews. These Chews are similar to rawhide only much safer. They made by a veterinary dental company and are coated with dental hygienic cleaning solution. (Please note: always give your pet Chews while under supervision)
 - Dental food or treats
 - Example: Hill's T/D – This is a life-stage food for dogs, which can also be given as a treat, and is formulated to scrape the tooth surface while your pet chews.
 - Feline Tarter control treats given daily.
 - Water additives/flushes
- To **treat** tarter buildup/gingivitis:
 - Once tarter has adhered to the tooth surface, it can **only be removed by an ultrasonic dental scaler** performed under anesthesia at the veterinary hospital.
 - If dental disease is caught early, the dental procedure includes scaling the tooth surface and under the gum line to **remove bacteria and plaque**. The teeth and gums are cleansed with polish similar to what you receive at your dentist.
 - If dental disease is advanced and include gum infection/inflammation (gingivitis) then the doctor may prescribe antibiotics before and after the dental procedure. Depending on the severity, if there is tooth decay, **teeth may need to be extracted** using various measures such as drilling.

In **Summary**, here are some reasons you should have your pet treated **sooner** rather than later:

Decreased risk of tooth and bone loss

Eliminate pain from gum infection/tooth ache

Decreased cost of dental procedure due to **less anesthesia time** and fewer extractions

Healthy teeth and gums can lead to a longer life for your pet

