

## Dental health

A healthy mouth is essential to help support your animal's natural resistance to disease. Dental Plaque is a build up of a mixture of oral bacteria, food debris and proteins in the saliva. This hardens on the teeth to form calculus, further accumulation can begin to push the gum back. This leads to inflammation and infection of the gums causing redness and swelling (Gingivitis). Dental disease can be reversed without difficulty if treated early in its development.

Prevention is better than cure, especially when you consider that more than 80% of dogs and cats over the age of 3 years have some form of dental disease.

Looking out for early signs is vital as appropriate dental care can prevent many of the dental problems seen by vets:

- ¥ Persistent bad breath
- ¥ Discoloured teeth from white to brown/yellow as tartar mineralises
- ¥ Difficulty eating, loss of appetite
- ¥ Sensitivity around the mouth - Pawing at the mouth
- ¥ Dribbling saliva
- ¥ Reddening of the gums

We offer a variety of nurse's clinics including dental hygiene consultations to find a dental hygiene routine that suits you, your animal and your lifestyles. Regular check-ups every 6 months are important to detect any problems at an early stage as tartar can start to build up again as early as the next meal after dental treatment.

Homecare initially from an early age and after dental treatment is the most effective way to prevent problems occurring or to help prevent further problems. There are a number of different options to try:

### Tooth Brushing

Enzymatic Toothpaste specially designed for animal's works by killing the bacteria that causes plaque.

Use an toothpaste – apply daily with a gentle brushing action

- ✓ Use a medium bristle type toothbrush + toothpaste specifically for animals
- ✓ Try to introduce at an early age, but its never too late to start
- ✓ Ideally brush teeth daily, pick a time when you and your animal are relaxed

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### Dental Chews

The X shape of chew uses the natural mechanical cleaning action of chewing with a unique texture to help to reduce the build up of tartar by up to 80%.

Dogs require 1 chew per day Dentastix or 1 chew every other day with Dentagen Chews

## VetAquadent

This drinking water additive contains: CHLORHEXIDIE = effective anti-plaque agent  
XYLITOL = limits build up of plaque and tartar

Mix a fresh solution daily – 6ml Aquadent : 250ml Water

## Hills T/d Prescription Diet

This diet is proven to help reduce gingivitis and plaque build up. They have specially designed kibble (the shape of the biscuits) so that instead of crumbling when bitten the fibre matrix of the biscuit maintains contact with the tooth. This cleans the plaque away from the gum line, reducing tartar formation and gingivitis. This is a complete diet but it can be fed in conjunction with other diets of a minimum of 1/3 of the total daily amount for the benefits it provides.

Puppies and kittens have baby (Deciduous) teeth that appear at 2-3 weeks in the cat and 3-4 weeks in the dog. Adult teeth then start to appear at about 3-4 months and continues until the animal is 6-7 months. We recommend that you frequently handle the mouths of your young animals; this should increase their acceptance of tooth brushing in the future.

Step by Step guide to brushing teeth:

DAY 1 — Gently stroke the outside of your pets cheeks with your finger only and slowly lift the lip for a few seconds. Reward and praise at the end of a session and repeat a couple of times throughout the day

DAY 2 — Repeat as above and also place a small amount of toothpaste on the end of your finger and let your pet sample it. See their reaction to the taste, make it an enjoyable experience with lots of praise

DAY 3 — Repeat Day 2 but this time gently massage gums and teeth for 30 — 45 seconds. Reward with a treat and praise.

DAY 4 — Repeat day 3 adding 15 seconds times to running your finger or finger brush over your pets teeth. When the animal is comfortable with this finger brushes, toothbrushes can be introduced, perseverance and a lot of praise is needed to succeed. Always reward with a treat and praise.

DAY 5 - 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 6 — Repeat as Day 5 and increase the time by 30 seconds.

DAY 7 — By now you should be aiming to spend at least one minute on each side of the mouth.

If you require assistance ask a nurse to demonstrate the easiest way to start brushing teeth.

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