



# Vets Love Pets!

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## Happy Smiles and Pearly Whites:

### Brush Up on Pet Oral Health

Brush twice a day in circular motions and do not forget to floss. We are all aware that a major component in maintaining our health is proper dental care, however we tend to overlook our pets in this regard. A survey conducted by the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) found that only 10 percent of pet owners brush their pet's teeth. Just like us, a lack in regular oral care can mean serious consequences in our pet's health and well-being. As February is National Pet Dental month, we are highlighting some warning signs and information about periodontal (gum) diseases as well as offering dental care tips to help prevent any painful problems.

#### Symptoms of periodontal disease

Any of the following symptoms could be indicative of a more serious problem and should be discussed with your veterinarian:

- **Halitosis** – Dog and cat breath should not stink - it's true, no doggy breath! A pet with bad breath may suffer from periodontal disease in that the odour is coming from bacteria around the teeth and gums.
- **Inflammation** – Gum tissue should be a coral pink colour, except where it is pigmented black or brown. Red gums mean inflammation and are a sign of infection.
- **Bleeding** – Inflamed gums bleed easily – watch for blood on your pet's toys after chewing, it could mean a sign of infection.
- **Damaged teeth** – Playing and chewing on hard toys can break teeth and expose the internal pulp. This requires treatment – left untreated and the pulp exposed allows infection to travel through the root canal and into the area around the root tip.
- **Changes in chewing behaviour** – Pets that chew only on one side of their mouth or start preferring softer food and toys may have a broken tooth or suffer from endodontic disease.
- **Swellings and discharges** – In advanced cases, endodontic infection can break through the bone causing the jaw or face around the infected tooth to swell. Infection can also break through into the nasal passages and tear ducts, leading to eye infections or chronic respiratory problems.



#### What causes periodontal (gum) disease?

As in humans, gum disease is an infection resulting from the build up of soft dental plaque on the surfaces of the teeth around the gums. When plaque is allowed to accumulate, the bacteria irritates the gum tissue, which often leads to infection in the bone surrounding the teeth. The photo (below) is an example of plaque and tartar build up.



#### Diseases

##### Gingivitis

This is the progression of plaque accumulating on teeth, allowing bacteria to multiply on the teeth and gums. The bacteria irritates the gums causing them to become tender, red and swollen.

##### Periodontal disease

Periodontitis is the evolution of gingivitis when it goes untreated. It is the most common pet disease, affecting more than 85 percent of dogs and cats over four years of age. Eventually, the gums become so irritated that they pull away from the teeth creating pockets that trap more bacteria. The pockets deepen and bacteria begin to attack the roots of the teeth and the jaw.

##### Endodontic disease

This disease of the soft tissue inside the tooth (the pulp) is extremely painful and can act as a conduit in which infection can enter the body.

Bacteria in the bloodstream can cause ...

- lung disease
- liver disease
- heart disease
- kidney infection

#### Prevention

In order to avoid any oral health problems in your furry friend's future, adhere to the following advice to achieve sparkling dental care.

- Consult your veterinary health care team for direction on the proper technique for brushing your pet's teeth daily.
- Do NOT use human toothpastes as they contain detergents and foaming agents which can be harmful to your pet when swallowed.
- Start brushing your pet's teeth when they are young so they have a chance to grow accustomed to the routine.
- Some pets are more prone to plaque and tartar build up than others. For those more so, incorporate cleanings into their veterinary visits.

Your pet's **diet and treats** can contribute to or control plaque and tartar build up. When choosing your pet's food/treats, look for products stamped with the Veterinary Oral Health Council (VOHC) Seal identifying products that have met standards in plaque and tartar control. Do not be fooled – dry food is not always better than wet – depending on the quality, it may not be providing the resistance needed to help clean the teeth when chewing.



# SPCA

## Fundraiser

A HUGE thank you to Taz, Bo, Gizmo, Tori, Cosmo, Gizmo L., Kirby, Sheba, Mindy, Nella, Candy, Benny, Harley, Caine, Winston, Spencer, Rudi, Marley, Holly, Zeus, Benson, Hedges, and Aero for helping their fellow pet. Our own Amanda Harvey-Tench (below right) presented the cheque to Stephanie McDonald, Executive Director of the Edmonton Humane Society (below left) on January 20.



## Pet Dental Night 2009

In honour of National Pet Dental month, we are hosting our annual Pet Dental Awareness evening on Wednesday, February 25<sup>th</sup> from 7pm-9pm. It will be an informative evening featuring guest speakers from the industry's leading organizations, tooth-brushing demonstrations, and a gift pack for all those in attendance. Please call 780.458.6051 to reserve your complimentary space.



## At-home Dental Care

We are proud to offer an extensive line of home dental care products that encourage oral health. This includes toothbrushes, toothpaste, chews and Hill's Prescription Diet t/d food. Recognized by the VOHC, t/d diet is clinically proven to reduce gingivitis, build-up of tartar, plaque and stain.



Don't forget your beloved furry one this Valentine's Day! Show them how much you care by indulging them a new toy or leash. Stop in to see our collection toys and treats to find something for your special someone.



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