

DENTISTRY FOR YOUR CAT



All of us know about the benefits of routine dental care for ourselves. Daily brushing and flossing, and regular visits to the dentist, keep our teeth and gums healthy and comfortable. Unfortunately, routine dental care is still an often neglected item of cat general health care. Your pets, as well as you, deserve regular dental care.

After your pet reaches a few years of age, tartar begins to build up at the junction of the gums and teeth. If this tartar is not removed, it increases until it undermines the tissue and causes inflamed and receding gums. The area then becomes infected. Infection leads to foul breath, as well as pain and a constant unsavory taste for the pet. If the situation is not soon remedied, severe gum infections, abscessed teeth and cheek ulcers will develop.

Chronic infections of the teeth and gums result in problems elsewhere in the body as well. Bacteria enter the bloodstream from infected teeth and cause infection in organs such as the liver, kidneys, heart and joints. Good dental care lengthens pets' lives an average of 10 - 20% through the prevention of these secondary problems.



Cats are especially prone to gingivitis (inflammation of the gums) and resorptive lesions, a type of cavity that occurs at the gum line and eventually destroys the tooth. Brachycephalic cats (those with squished faces such as Persians) usually have more severe dental disease.



Anything that would cause pain in your own mouth also causes pain in animals. As a result of mouth pain cats may drool, paw at the mouth, refuse dry food or even stop eating altogether. It's important to realize that these symptoms do not appear until pain is severe. Cats are good at hiding pain and survival drive will keep them eating even when their mouths hurt. If it's red or swollen, it hurts!

You can help prevent dental problems in your pets by feeding a tartar control pet food. Daily or even as little as twice weekly brushing of your cat's teeth with a toothpaste made for pets will also help prevent tartar buildup. Dental treats are available to assist in this as well. Look for products that carry the VOHC seal logo, which means they have been clinically proven to work. Some pet foods are formulated to reduce plaque and tartar, some by as much as 50% - ask us for a recommendation.

Just as with people your pets will still require regular dental exams, and cleaning or extractions as necessary. Under general anesthesia, the teeth are cleaned with an ultrasonic dental scaler, much like the one your own dentist uses, and then polished. Polishing smooths the surface of the teeth to help discourage future tartar formation. Your pet will also receive a sealant treatment to help reduce plaque build-up.

Other more advanced procedures such as root canal work, restorations and even braces are also available should your cat ever need them. We encourage you to be concerned about your pet's oral health and to keep in mind the availability of effective treatments for dental problems. Make dentistry a part of your pet's total health care plan, for a longer and happier life and a brighter smile!

The following videos about dental care are available on our website and our YouTube channel, BfVCTV.

Dental Home Care: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vQb8C9HKQUU>

Benefits & Risks of Dental Cleaning in Cats:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U75BPDMnl0A>

Periodontal Disease: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=co4FsEO55j4>

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