

## Teeth Matter – Preventing Dental Issues!

Did you know that pets develop plaque, tartar and gingivitis in their mouths just like we do? Not only can these conditions cause chronic pain in the mouth, but periodontal disease can actually cause infection throughout the body. It is the most common health condition in pets over the age of 3. It causes bacteria to travel to the heart, liver and kidneys where organ damage can occur. This isn't just a pet concern – it happens in people too.

Oral pain is terrible. If you've ever had a sore tooth, you know! Unfortunately, our pets are pretty food motivated so they tend to put up a brave front even when their teeth hurt. They do eventually show signs that something is wrong. They might suffer from back breath, paw at their mouth, drool, bleed from their

gums, start dropping their food while chewing, favour soft foods or have a decrease in appetite. They may also develop a tooth abscess, in which case you might notice pus, or swelling on their face.

You don't want to wait for these things to happen. Not only are they serious – the options to remedy them can be costly because they may require tooth extractions. We've never met a pet that would sit quietly, open their mouth and say "Ahhh," so dental work of any kind requires a full general anesthetic.

As humans who practice good oral hygiene by brushing and flossing routinely, we still require professional cleanings and maintenance by our dental hygienist and dentist. Pets are no different, and so we wanted to highlight what you can do at home, in between professional cleanings.

### "Clean" by Eating!

Consider a kibble patented to minimize plaque, tartar and gingivitis through mechanical or enzymatic action. Not all dental foods and treats work the same way and some boast fancy claims without the science to back it up. That said, there are several foods we can recommend that are not only affordable, but also very palatable (which pets tell us is the most important thing)!



### "Clean" by Drinking!

We have a special water additive, kind of like a "drinkable mouthwash," that you can put in your pet's bowl to help control the accumulation of plaque, and slow tartar and gingivitis development.



The Veterinary Oral Health Council (VOHC) authorizes the use of the VOHC Registered Seal on products intended to help reduce plaque and tartar on the teeth of animals.



**Brush Their Teeth!**

The last thing you can do at home is to brush. No, we're not kidding! If you are open to spending a few minutes each day, you'll find that most pets take well to having their teeth brushed (at least the outer aspects). It doesn't hurt to have interesting pet-friendly toothpastes in fun flavours... chicken or liver anyone?!

If your pet has already developed some plaque and tartar accumulation, they will benefit from a professional dental cleaning with your veterinary team. After a thorough scaling and polishing (yes, just like at your own dentist), you can start a home care routine to maintain their oral hygiene – and their great breath!

