

Dental Problems in the Cat and Dog



When did you last look in your pet's mouth ?

And why should you?

Pets are very good at hiding pain and discomfort so you may never notice problems before you look. Many pets eat and chew well despite dental related pain. Broken teeth, common if bones or stones are chewed, may go undetected for years. Pain can certainly change an animal's temperament for the worse!

The most common disease we see in pets over three years old is periodontal (gum) disease. This causes bad breath, or halitosis, and presents as red gums. Bacteria hidden in the plaque and tartar cause infection in other parts of the body, especially the kidneys, heart and liver. Infection spreads via the bloodstream and can be hard to diagnose and treat. In some cases, these infections are life threatening. There is now evidence that inflamed gums or gingivitis can contribute to chronic inflammatory conditions like diabetes and heart disease.

Some breeds, especially smaller dogs and certain individuals, are more prone to periodontal disease. These animals especially need help with the use of dental diets, treats, brushing, and professional cleans. However, all pets benefit from these products.

As well as pain and gingivitis, pulpitis, holes in the teeth, fistulae and oral cancers can be detected on an examination. Some problems are not diagnosed until a dental exam is carried out under general anaesthesia. Tartar can also be removed properly with a descaler, and the teeth polished afterwards.

However, plaque and tartar return if the teeth are not cared for at home. Luckily there are several excellent products that act as little toothbrushes to maintain healthy gums and teeth. Tooth brushing is an excellent and cheap way to ensure healthy incisor (front) and canine teeth as these are not cleaned by chews. Mouthwashes added to the pets' drinking water are also available.

Products we recommend are Veterinary Oral Health Council approved and so have evidence they work!

- Hills t/d food: all sizes
- Science diet oral care
- Canine and feline Greenies : all types
- Royal Canin dental diet
- Eukanuba adult maintenance for dogs

So our advice is to be an advocate for your pet, and improve their general health by getting their teeth checked, and keeping them healthy.

