



FEBRUARY IS DENTAL MONTH AT COUNTRYSIDE VETERINARY CLINIC!

Did you know that pets can develop dental disease and other dental problems just like people? Well they do! In fact periodontal or gum disease, caused by the build-up of plaque or tartar, has become the number one health problem for dogs and cats. It is estimated that without proper dental care, 80% of all dogs and

70% of all cats will show signs of oral disease by age three.¹

Problems with pet oral health usually begin with plaque, a sticky bacterial film that forms continuously on your pet's teeth. Plaque then hardens and turns into tartar, which can accumulate and compromise your pet's teeth and gums. If tartar build-up is left untreated it can lead to gingivitis and eventually periodontal disease. Your pet could lose teeth and become prone to infections that cause liver, kidney and heart disease.

Tartar can only be removed with a professional dental cleaning.

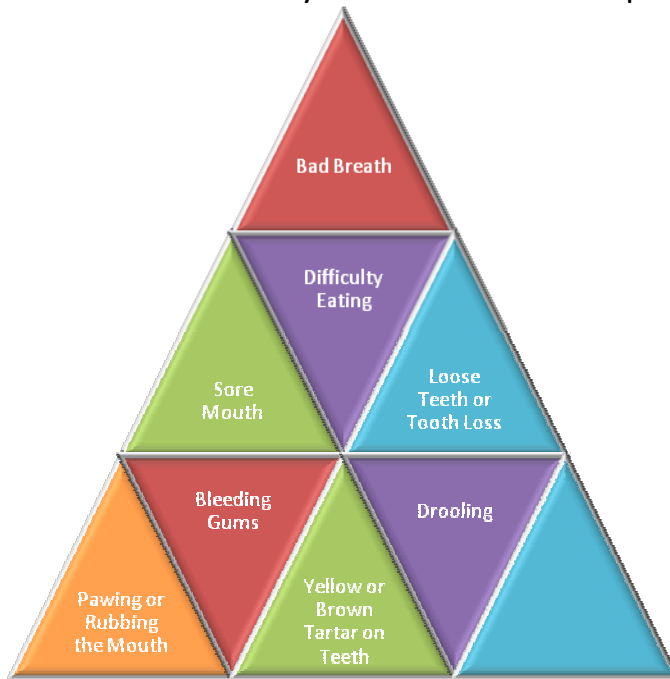
¹ "Pet Dental Care." Online Article. Schering-Plough Animal Health Corporation, 2002, Web. 19 Jan 2010.
www.myvetonline.com



Figure 1 - A dental exam is the first step to better health

How do you know if your pet needs a dental cleaning? First schedule an exam. We recommend you do this yearly to detect any early symptoms of dental disease. If we discover tartar build-up, gingivitis or other tooth problems your pet will need a dental cleaning.

Here are some of the common signs that your pet may have an oral health problem:



What does a dental cleaning encompass?

Pre-anesthetic blood work – We always do blood work before your pet under goes anesthesia. The blood work generally consists of a CBC and a chemistry profile. A CBC checks for anemia and infection. The chemistry profile checks organ function, mainly kidneys and liver and it also checks

blood sugar. The blood work may find problems that cannot be detected during a physical exam.

Anesthesia – Your pet will need to go under anesthesia for the dental cleaning. The idea of anesthesia can be scary, but it is actually very safe. The doctor will tailor the anesthesia used to your pet's age and health status. Your pet will be monitored closely during the procedure and throughout recovery. The majority of patients recover quickly and are able to go home the same day.

Oral Exam - Once your pet is under anesthesia we perform a full oral exam. Any loose, broken, or missing teeth are noted in the chart along with any oral tumors or lesions. The gums around the teeth are probed and any pockets are noted.

Scale and Polish – We scale all the tartar and plaque from the teeth and then polish your pet's teeth. This is very similar to what humans have done when our teeth are cleaned.

Extractions – We also may extract any teeth that are loose or broken.

Pain Medications/Antibiotics - We send antibiotics and pain medication home with your pet after the dental cleaning.

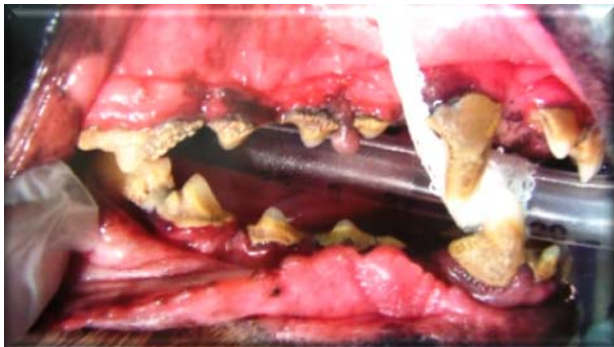


Figure 2 - Before Dental Cleaning

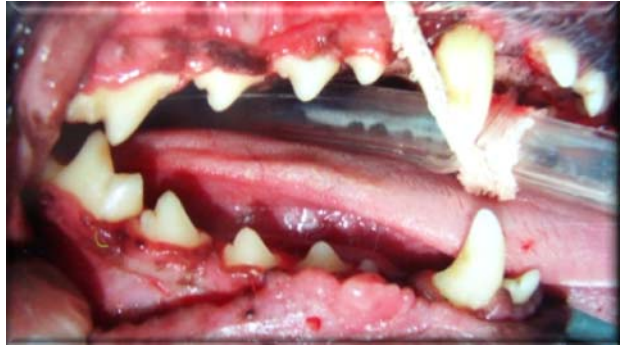


Figure 3 - After Dental Cleaning

When you come to pick-up your pet one of our doctors or technicians will go over the dental cleaning and explain what after care steps need to be taken.

Once your pet's teeth are cleaned, it is possible to reduce or even eliminate the need for future dental cleanings. We will help you introduce a brushing regimen for your pet. Brushing is easy and can be fun for you and your pet! A technician will walk you through how to do brush your pet's teeth step-by-step.

Figure 4 - Brushing is an important step in maintaining your pet's dental health



We also may recommend a special diet for your pet designed to reduce plaque and tartar build-up – especially if the pet is prone to dental problems due to breed or individual genetic history. (Some sticky foods can lead to a more rapid build-up of plaque. So depending on your pet’s diet, you may need to make a change in food.)

We are passionate about your pet’s health! Call us and schedule a dental exam or cleaning today!

