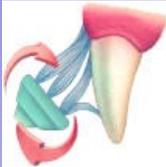


Home Dental Care for Your Pet

Home dental care is just as important to your pet's health as the professional dental prophylaxis performed by our Veterinary Technicians. Without a home care routine, dental disease will return within 6 months of a professional cleaning.

Brushing

This is the best method but takes time and practice. Use a brush and paste formulated especially for pets. **Do not use human toothpaste**, as this can make your pet sick if swallowed. Brushing needs to be done at least every other day to help remove plaque before it becomes tartar.



Rinsing

This is the next best technique. Applying Hexarinse® to the mouth after every meal provides an antimicrobial defense against dental disease by killing germs and preventing formation of plaque.

Chewing

There are a number of toys and treats designed to help control dental disease. Although they are fun and easy, they are not as effective as brushing or rinsing.

C.E.T. Chews®: These popular treats contain enzymes that help break down plaque and tartar as your pet chews on them. They are available for both cats and dogs and can be given 2 to 3 times weekly.



Hill's t/d®: This was initially formulated as a diet but works very well as a treat if given daily. The crunchy kibbles break down into tiny crystals that gently scrub the teeth above the gum line, removing plaque and tartar and freshening the breath.



Milk-Bone Brushing Chews®: These daily dental treats are clinically proven to reduce tartar and fight bad breath. The dental twist bone is designed to help clean even hard to reach back teeth and down to the gum line.

Our staff will be happy to explain and demonstrate how to use these products to help your pet keep healthy teeth and a happy smile!

Indian Walk veterinary center

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WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT Dental Care and Your Pet

Indian Walk Veterinary Center, P.C.



*Caring for Pets and the
People Who Love Them*

We humans have been taught that we must brush our teeth at least twice daily, floss every day, and rinse with mouthwash to help prevent tooth decay. We visit our dentists regularly for a dental checkup and professional cleaning.

What about our pets?

Studies show that 70 to 80% of dogs and cats suffer from some form of dental disease by 3 years of age!

What factors contribute to dental disease in pets?

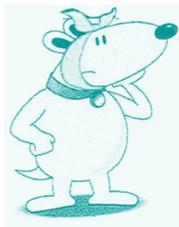
- Lack of routine dental care at home.
- Poorly positioned teeth due to crowding, rotated teeth or retained deciduous ("baby") teeth.
- Malocclusion (over or under-bite) in which the teeth do not meet properly when chewing.
- Genetics; some breeds of dogs and cats (and some individual animals) are more prone to dental problems than others.

How does dental disease happen?

It starts with plaque, a colorless film, composed mostly of bacteria, that forms continuously on the teeth and gums. As it mixes with food particles and minerals in the saliva, it becomes a brownish paste called tartar. Over time, it hardens into a cement-like material called calculus.

The first stage of dental disease is called gingivitis. The gums are swollen, red and sore. There may be a bright red line along the edge of the gums and the beginnings of bad breath. This stage is reversible with early intervention and professional care.

Untreated, gingivitis progresses to periodontal disease. Calculus advances under the gum line, breaking the attachments between the teeth and their surrounding tissues. Bacteria invade the damaged tissues, causing inflammation and further damage to the teeth and gums. When the infection spreads to the tooth roots and jaw, abscesses form and teeth are lost. At this point you may notice a severe foul odor to your pet's breath, and he or she may have difficulty eating due to pain. You may see bleeding when your pet chews.



As if this is not enough, the danger of dental disease is not confined to the mouth. The chronic infection in the mouth allows harmful bacteria to be absorbed into the blood stream. The kidneys and liver, which cleanse the blood, are damaged by constant exposure to bacteria and their toxic by-products. The lungs and heart are also at risk of damage due to long-term systemic infection.

Once severe periodontal disease has developed, much of the damage is irreversible. We can only do our best to improve the situation as much as possible with professional periodontal treatment followed by faithful home care.

How do I know if my pet needs professional dental care?

An oral inspection is a routine part of your pet's annual physical exam. This is also a good time for you to bring to our attention any concerns you have regarding your pet's oral health. We will gladly discuss and demonstrate the various home dental care products available to make it as easy as possible to care for your pet's teeth. If necessary, we will recommend that you schedule a professional dental prophylaxis or periodontal procedure with one of our excellent Veterinary Technicians.

How do I schedule professional dental care for my pet?

These procedures require a period of anesthesia, so they are scheduled on our surgery mornings (Tuesday through Thursday). Your pet will be admitted between 8:00-8:30 am. The admitting technician will ask you about any health concerns that may have come up since your pet's last visit. She will also verify that your preoperative instructions have been followed and make sure that we have a way of reaching you during the day in case any questions arise. If you do not already have a written estimate for the procedure, she will provide you with one. A deposit of 50% of the estimated cost is required at admission. The remainder is due at discharge.

What happens to my pet during the dental procedure?

- A physical exam will be performed by a trained Veterinary Technician, who will bring any abnormal findings to the attention of the attending veterinarian. This technician will be with your pet throughout the process, until he or she is out of recovery.
- If your pet is over 5 years of age, blood will be drawn for a Complete Blood Count and a General Health Panel. These tests will ensure that your pet's vital organs are capable of handling the anesthesia.
- If your pet is under 5 years old blood work is still highly recommended for your pet's safety.
- An IV catheter will be placed so that anesthetics and other medications can be administered safely.
- Your pet will be anesthetized using the safest and most modern techniques available. Heart rate, oxygen level, breathing and temperature will be constantly monitored until your pet is fully awake.



- A thorough exam of the mouth and throat will be performed to pick up any abnormality that might be hard to see in an awake animal. The teeth will be charted and any missing or damaged teeth noted. Pockets between the teeth and gum will be measured.
- Digital X-rays of the entire mouth will be taken to look for any signs of disease under the gum line.
- The teeth will be scaled by hand as well as ultrasonically to remove all traces of plaque, tartar and calculus.
- Teeth with severely diseased roots or exposed pulp cavities will be removed to eliminate a source of chronic infection. If extractions or other painful procedures are necessary, your pet will receive appropriate pain medications during and after the procedure.
- The mouth is thoroughly flushed with an antibacterial solution to kill germs.
- The teeth are polished to smooth their surfaces in order to slow the buildup of tartar.
- Anesthesia will be discontinued. Depending on the extent of dental disease, your pet will be asleep for anywhere from 30 minutes to over an hour.
- Your pet will be brushed out, ears cleaned, nails clipped, then moved to a soft padded bed in the recovery area to continue waking up.
- Once fully awake, your pet will have a drink of water, a snack and a short walk outside.
- At discharge time, a technician will discuss what was done for your pet and go over your discharge instructions and home dental care suggestions.



For more information go to:

<https://www.avma.org/public/PetCare/Pages/Pet-Dental-Care.aspx>

<http://www.avdc.org/ownersinfo.html>

