

PERIODONTAL DISEASE IN DOGS & CATS

Your cat or dog has been diagnosed with periodontal disease. Although you may have noticed your pet's bad breath, gingivitis, tartar build-up or discolored teeth, much of periodontal disease occurs underneath the gum line, where it can't be easily seen. **Periodontal disease is painful.** In people, chewing with infected teeth is possible but it hurts. If you have a sprained ankle, you can walk on it but it's not comfortable. In a similar way, pets and people can eat and chew with periodontal disease, but not comfortably. Periodontal disease can also have a major impact on your pet's overall health. We hope this handout addresses the primary areas of concern regarding this disease and its treatment. Relieving pain and preventing further health problems are our top priorities when dealing with dental issues in your pet.

Periodontal disease involves the tissues below the gum line and includes the possibility of bone infection, gum inflammation, and the spread of bacteria to other organs including the heart, kidneys and liver. X-rays are necessary to determine the extent of disease in dogs just as in people.

Monitoring /Anesthesia Risk

All pets must be anesthetized to be able to perform the thorough cleaning and exam that is necessary to detect problems with teeth and gums. **We take the risk of anesthesia very seriously.** As a clinic we have invested a great deal of time and expense to insure that we have all possible parameters monitored for your pet's safety.

Each pet will have the following parameters constantly monitored:

- Blood pressure (BP)
- Oxygen (pulse oximetry)
- Respiration (RR)
- Heart Rate (ECG)
- Temperature

Basic dental cleaning procedure (prophy)

The major goal of teeth cleaning is to remove the tartar (also called calculus) and plaque that irritates the gum tissue, causes pain and is a source of infection for the teeth, gums, bone and bloodstream. The first stage of dental care is to remove the tartar and plaque.

In pets we use the following sequence:

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- Ultrasonic scaling to remove calculus
- Hand scaling to finish below the gum line
- Polishing to smooth the enamel surface
- Complete oral exam to detect chipped teeth, oral cancer, gum recession and pockets
- Pet's dental chart updated to insure good follow-up from year to year
- Before and after dental photos

Dental X-ray Images

If chipped, missing, loose or discolored teeth, cavities, receded or inflamed gums or deep gum pockets are identified after thorough cleaning, x-ray images may be necessary to determine the extent of disease. X-rays help us to decide which teeth can stay and which may need to be removed. Based on the extent of disease, further treatment, if needed can be planned. Extractions, if needed, can be done in different ways depending on the radiographic image. Baseline radiography for young and middle aged dogs and oral cancer detection in older dogs and cats are also good reasons to take dental x-ray images.

X-rays may reveal root abscesses, bone recession around infected teeth, broken roots or cavities below the gum line.

"Functional" Dentistry

Extractions vs. Root canals: Teeth are of relative importance in the cat or dog's mouth. That is, certain teeth contribute much more to the chewing process and make up a greater portion of jaw stability than other teeth. Therefore, we often give more attention to, and try to save, those teeth that are very important vs. "trying to save all teeth at all costs". If your pet's periodontitis is advanced we will help you decide upon the best treatment plan for your pet.

Advanced Periodontal Disease (deep pockets and damaged gum tissue)

Part of the exam will include probing the gum line to determine pocket depths. Deep pockets indicate more advanced periodontal disease and require a radiograph. Dogs are more likely than cats to have gum pockets due to their larger size teeth. Based on radiographs, further treatment such as periosteal or consil regeneration may be recommended.

Periosteal: this product is a polymer containing an antibiotic (Doxycycline) that is placed into deep pockets to rejuvenate gum tissue and help restore the normal protection that a tooth needs to prevent deep infection.

Consil regeneration: a synthetic bone material used to save teeth by allowing the bone to reestablish itself and stabilize a tooth before it loosens.

Pain Management

Pain relief is a very big concern to those of us at Best Friends Veterinary Center.

All pets that have periodontitis, extractions or any other painful procedures will be given medications to control pain *before* any painful or potentially painful procedure is performed. When extractions or root planing (a deep scraping below the gum line) are performed additional pain relief is indicated.

Pain relief may include:

- Injections and/or tablets given before, during and after the procedure
- Time-release fentanyl patch
- Local nerve blocks (the same as used in human dentistry)
- NSAID therapy (non steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) such as Rimadyl or Metacam

We will treat each pet individually to insure his or her procedure is pain free.

Please let us know if you have any questions about your pet's dental procedures. **Our goal is to treat any painful problems in your pet's mouth during their teeth-cleaning visit so that we don't have to subject them to an additional anesthetic episode.** We have found good communication is vital to achieve this goal.

DENTAL HOMECARE FOR DOGS & CATS

The goal of homecare is to maximize the time before your pet needs another cleaning. Without a good homecare plan, plaque & tartar will quickly cause pain, discomfort and disease for your pet. We personalize homecare for each pet. The following are some of the options we have in dogs:

Veterinary Oral Health Council (VOHC) Approved Foods:

T/D: one of the easiest most effective prevention options. This product has the VOHC (Veterinary Oral Health Council) seal for tartar and plaque prevention. It is up to 36% effective in preventing plaque and 58% effective in controlling tartar if fed as 100% of pet's dietary intake. You can find more information at Hill's website, www.hillspet.com/index.jsp

Science Diet Oral Care is an over-the-counter food that also has the VOHC seal for tartar and plaque prevention. Control of plaque is 28% better and tartar is at least 46% better than average dry dog foods. Iams Dental Defense products contain hexametaphosphate, and have the only tartar prevention rating from the VOHC.

Water Additives

Oxyfresh is a tasteless, odorless solution formulated to promote healthy gum tissue and improve oral hygiene. Contains Oxyfresh's exclusive blend of Oxygene and Zinc Acetate, which effectively eliminates pet breath odors and helps reduce plaque and tartar formation. When added regularly to your pet's drinking water, Pet Oral Hygiene Solution is a simple, first line of defense against periodontal disease.

Wax Sealant

Ora Vet: a wax sealant applied to all external surfaces of the tooth to help prevent bacterial attachment. When reapplied once or twice weekly it is 24-47% effective in preventing plaque & tartar buildup. You can visit <http://us.Merial.com/index.asp> for more information.

Products for brushing

CET flavored pastes that have a natural enzyme system to kill bacteria. Used in daily brushing, this will help prevent plaque and tartar buildup better than any other single homecare product.

CET Oral Hygiene Rinse: a dental rinse that contains chlorhexadine and zinc gluconate in a plaque fighting formula.

Treats

CET HEXtra Chews: rawhide chews that contain a natural enzyme system found in dog's saliva that kills bacteria. They also contain chlorhexidine, an antibacterial agent and hexametaphosphate, a tartar reducing agent. Give at least 1 per day (up to 2-3). For cats, CET chews are also an option.