



## DENTAL DISEASE

Dental disease is very common in dogs and cats with 25% suffering from calculus and 20% suffering from gingivitis. Every 24 hours a clear film of bacteria covers your pet's teeth from the bacteria in their mouth. If this isn't brushed or rubbed off by chewing bones or dental sticks then layers of this bacteria form a film on top of each other which builds up and causes thick yellow plaque or calculus. This calculus is fixed to the pet's teeth and will cause inflammation of the gum line called gingivitis.

Eventually this tartar and gingivitis leads to periodontal disease which is the most common infectious disease of dogs and cats. It causes a progressive loosening of the teeth which eventually become rotten and can fall out. This can be very painful for your pet and also acts as a focus of infection in the body causing organ damage and body wide infections.

### Clinical Signs

Dogs and cats tolerate chronic dental pain very well and often show no outward signs. In more severe cases you may see:

- Reduction in or loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Difficulty swallowing
- Chewing on one side
- Going to the food bowl as though wanting to eat, taking a couple of mouthfuls and then walking away
- Excessive drooling
- Bad breath
- Chattering of the jaws
- Difficulty opening the mouth

### Treatment

Once tartar has built up considerably and there is severe periodontal disease the only way the teeth can be cleaned and fully assessed is under general anaesthesia. We will anaesthetise your pet and assess the health of every tooth and check the mouth and throat thoroughly for any other problems. Some teeth with severe periodontal disease, or in cats if the teeth are resorbing, require removal. Dogs and cats cope very well when missing a few teeth or even with none at all and after they have been removed, even as quickly as the next day, are happier than before the operation. All remaining teeth will be cleaned with a scaler to remove all calculus and bacteria and then polished to strengthen them.

### Ongoing management - Dogs

Your pet's teeth need to be cleaned every day, just like ours. This removes the film of bacteria on a daily basis preventing tartar build up and gingivitis. You need to do this using special dog tooth brush and dog toothpaste. Most dogs will let you do this especially if it is done regularly from an early age. If this is not possible then chewing should be encouraged on dental sticks (if your dog is small, large dogs will chew it too quickly and not get the benefits) or raw bones from the nature's menu



range to encourage teeth cleaning. It is important to choose the right bone for your dog so book a free appointment with our nurses to discuss this. Some breeds are more pre-disposed than others to dental disease, for example sight hounds and toy breeds, so it is essential for them to have good dental hygiene. We will also recommend you use health mouth, a water additive clinically proven to reduce tartar and gingivitis by 75%. It is made from natural and human grade ingredients and has a no drink money back guarantee!

#### Ongoing management - Cats

Some cats will let you brush their teeth but most won't! In these cases it is always good to include some kibble in your cat's diet to help them crunch off any tartar. Water additives are the mainstay of feline dental care and we recommend healthy mouth which is clinically proven to reduce plaque and calculus by 81%. It is very palatable and safe to use in all cats. Also it is very important to have your cat vaccinated as cat flu which is very common in the cat population can cause severe dental problems and gingivitis.