

# AWARENESS IS THE FIRST STEP TO PREVENTION

If you notice any of the signs of dental disease listed below, be sure to talk to your veterinarian as soon as possible

- Bad breath
- Loose, broken or discolored teeth
- Sensitivity to having the mouth touched
- Drooling or dropping food from the mouth
- Occasional bleeding of gum tissue
- Decreased appetite or weight loss (because these signs can also be due to other diseases, and you should speak with your veterinarian immediately)<sup>1</sup>

However, since most periodontal disease occurs below the gums, you may not notice any of these signs. Therefore, a routine annual examination is important, so that your veterinarian can determine if your pet has dental disease.

## BE CERTAIN

Your veterinarian will examine your pet's mouth during each routine physical examination to determine if your dog or cat has dental disease. Once dental disease is diagnosed, your veterinarian will discuss the steps needed to get your pet's teeth and gums healthy again.

## ASK YOUR VETERINARIAN ABOUT YOUR PET'S DENTAL HEALTH TODAY.

# THE KEYS TO PREVENTIVE DENTAL CARE ARE:



**ROUTINE DENTAL CHECK-UPS AND CLEANINGS**



**DAILY TOOTH BRUSHING**



**APPROPRIATE CHEW TOYS**



**DENTAL DIET**

1. American Veterinary Dental College (AVDC). Information for owners. Available at: <http://avdc.org/ownersinfo.html>. Accessed October 29, 2018.

# WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Did you know that periodontal disease is the most common disease in both cats and dogs?<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, many pet owners are unaware of the risks of dental disease. Here are some common misconceptions, followed by the truth about these issues.



## MY DOG/CAT IS TOO YOUNG, TO HAVE DENTAL DISEASE.

**TRUTH:** It is estimated that most dogs and cats have periodontal disease by age 3.<sup>2</sup> Periodontal disease, an inflammatory condition, is the most common cause of dental disease in dogs and cats.<sup>3</sup>

## THEY'RE JUST TEETH. WHAT'S THE WORST THAT CAN HAPPEN?

**TRUTH:** Ignoring the care of teeth and gums can cause serious health problems for your pet. Periodontal disease in dogs and cats begins with plaque formation, which leads to inflammation, pain—especially long-lasting pain—and eventually tooth loss if left untreated. Studies have shown a link between periodontal disease and changes in internal organs, such as the heart, kidneys and liver.<sup>3,4</sup>

## I DON'T WANT MY PET TO HAVE ANESTHESIA BECAUSE IT IS RISKY.

**TRUTH:** It's natural to have concerns about anesthesia. However, anesthesia for a dental procedure for your pet is necessary and safe. General anesthesia is necessary for your pet because it allows them to be still so that your veterinarian can conduct a thorough examination of the mouth, take x-rays and perform other procedures. It also reduces your dog's or cat's level of anxiety, stress and pain, allowing for a safe and comfortable experience.

## 40 MINUTES VERSUS A 3-4 HOUR PROCEDURE



**PREVENTIVE CLEANING FOR A DOG WITH STAGE 1 DISEASE**  
(Approximately 40-minute procedure)



**ADVANCED PROCEDURE FOR A DOG WITH STAGE 3 DISEASE**  
(3-4-hour procedure)

## I AM CONCERNED THAT DENTAL CLEANINGS ARE COSTLY.

**TRUTH:** Just like they are for you, regular dental checkups and cleanings are important for your dog and cat. The cost of treating severe dental disease is 2.5 times more expensive than the cost of dental cleanings. Treating severe dental disease takes more time and requires more extensive procedures, which contribute to the higher costs.

Since most cats and dogs will suffer from dental disease in their lifetime<sup>2</sup>, it is better to prevent through regular dental check-ups and cleanings than to allow it to progress to severe disease.<sup>5</sup>

## THE GOOD NEWS: DENTAL DISEASE IS LARGELY PREVENTABLE.

Work with your veterinarian to implement routine dental checkups and cleanings along with an at-home plan to keep your pet's teeth and gums healthy. **It's that simple.**

2. American Veterinary Dental College(AVDC). Periodontal Disease. Available at: <https://www.avdc.org/periodontaldisease.html>. Accessed October 29, 2018.

3. DeBowes LJ. The effects of dental disease on systemic disease. Vet Clin North Am Small Anim Pract. 1998;28(5): 1057-62.

4. Pavlica Z, Petelin M, Juntos P, Erzen D, Crossley DA, Skaleric U. Periodontal disease burden and pathological changes in organs of dogs. J Vet Dent. 2008;25(2): 97-105.

5. Nationwide: Veterinary Wellness Visits Keep Pet Costs Down. Available at: <https://press8.petinsurance.com/articles/2013/march/veterinary-wellness-visitskeep-pet-costs-down>. Accessed October 29, 2018.



# THE DENTAL CLEANING: WHAT TO EXPECT

## BEFORE THE PROCEDURE

During your visit, you and your veterinarian will discuss your pet's medical history and your veterinarian will perform a complete physical exam. They may also take a sample of blood for a laboratory work up. Your veterinarian will discuss possible procedures to identify and treat the underlying dental problems including; dental cleaning, periodontal probing, dental x-rays and others.

## DURING THE PROCEDURE

For your pet's safety and comfort, the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) guidelines recommend that patients be anesthetized for several reasons. Anesthesia helps to reduce your pet's level of stress and ensures that your pet is safe and comfortable during the dental procedure.

During the dental procedure, your veterinarian will remove plaque and tartar from the teeth and polish them. Dental x-rays are used to further evaluate the periodontal health of your pet's mouth. If your veterinarian confirms that periodontal disease is present, they may perform extractions (remove damaged or unhealthy teeth) or other procedures as is necessary.

## AFTERCARE

Your veterinarian will review all procedures that were performed during the dental cleaning with you. If there is a severe infection or if your pet has an underlying condition that makes them susceptible to infection, your veterinarian may prescribe medications postoperatively, such as an antibiotic. A prescription for pain medication may also be provided as there is frequently some level of discomfort after a dental procedure.