

DENTAL CARE TIPS FOR YOUR CAT

Dental care is becoming one of the most relevant health issues of cats. In fact, 70% of cats show signs of oral and dental disease by the age of three. Oral disease is the cause of the majority of all pet illnesses, impacting heart, liver, kidney and intestinal problems. Though cats rarely get cavities, the formation of plaque and tartar can cause gingivitis and periodontal disease, causing bleeding gums and tooth loss. The bacteria that causes all this also travels through the bloodstream, eventually damaging major organs.



Cats are experts at hiding health problems and many cats with severe periodontal disease manage to continue to eat. By the time that a cat has a problem in chewing the condition is likely to be *very advanced*. Monitor your cat closely for signs of periodontal disease:

- Bad breath.
- Yellow or brown deposits on the teeth at the edges of the gums
- Reddened gum edges.
- Receding gums, revealing exposed tooth roots.
- Drooling saliva.
- Lack of appetite.
- Mouth pain (pawing at the mouth or rubbing the side of the mouth along the ground).
- Difficulty in chewing food.
- Inability to close the mouth.

DIET

What your pet eats affects his smile. Feed a diet of dry food. Dry cat food (kibble) is abrasive, helping to keep the teeth clean. In addition, the crunchy texture stimulates the gums to prevent gum disease. Talk to your veterinarian about the proper diet that should be fed to your furry friend, some might need a prescription dry food especially formulated to remove and prevent plaque buildup.

TREATS & TOYS

Cat dental treats and toys can help massage your pet's gums, scrape away plaque and help freshen breath while your cat plays.

BRUSHING

Brushing your cat's teeth daily is the #1 way to improve kitty breath and remove plaque. Starting home dental efforts is easiest when your pet is a kitten. Start brushing gradually and make it a pleasant experience. Special cat toothbrushes and flavored toothpaste will help make it a better experience for both you and your cat. Drinking water additives and oral rinses are safe and convenient new methods to prevent and control dental problems in cats.

DENTAL EXAMS

Annual veterinary visits are important for cats of all ages. Talk to your veterinarian about any mouth odors, pain, or other signs of dental problems you may have observed. Professional cleaning may be needed if there is a buildup of plaque or tartar.

Good dental habits will keep your pet's mouth healthy... and help them live longer, happier lives.