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Smile ☺: August is Dental Awareness Month

Most dog owners never take a good look inside their dog's mouth. And that's unfortunate because it is estimated that over 80 percent have significant oral pathology. Every day veterinarians are presented with patients for routine vaccinations or other minor afflictions whose oral health status is truly cause for alarm. Upon displaying the dog's loose teeth, sore and infected gums, and rotting tooth sockets to the dog's owner, the response usually is one of surprise and shock.

Did you know.....?

- ◆ Adult dogs have 42 teeth and adult cats have 30.
- ◆ By the age of two 78% of dogs and 70% of cats have some sort of dental disease.
- ◆ Up to 2/3 of a tooth is actually under the gum line, therefore much of the dental disease is under the gum line as well.
- ◆ "Doggie breath" is not normal and might be the first symptom of dental disease
- ◆ Inflammation of the gums is the initial stage of dental disease.
- ◆ Dental infections can spread systemically and may adversely affect organs such as heart, kidneys and liver.
- ◆ Aggressive chewing on hard objects such as commercially

available cow hooves is a primary source of broken teeth in dogs.

- ◆ Our veterinary surgeons at Port Kennedy Veterinary Hospital can help identify if your pet has dental disease.
- ◆ August is Dental Awareness month at Port Kennedy Veterinary Hospital.
- ◆ **15% discount on all dental procedures, discounts on dental products as well as discounted revisits provide substantial savings*.**

**discounts valid 1 Aug – 31 Aug 2015, not valid with any other offers or discounts.*

Even though we don't think about it that much, there is one telltale sign to watch for: bad breath.

We love their kisses, but we don't always love their breath. Bad breath is caused by bacteria. While some bacteria is normal – both for us and for our pets – when it forms a film of plaque on the teeth, breath gets gross. A lot of plaque is removed during normal daily activity, such as eating crunchy food, chewing toys, and even the normal tongue movement throughout the day.

But when plaque stays on the teeth, it starts to thicken and harden into tartar – which makes breath even worse. Tartar is a brownish buildup that you can see on the teeth – but by the time you see it on front teeth, it's likely that it is thick on back teeth, and





below the gum line, where it causes inflammation called gingivitis. If left untreated, gingivitis progresses into periodontal disease.

The good news is, there is plenty you can do to keep your pets' mouths clean and healthy.



Start with a dental health checkup. Your veterinarian may recommend a full dental cleaning. This is much like we would get at the dentist, but the pet has to be anesthetised because even the best-trained pet won't tolerate the scraping and polishing that needs to be done.

After the cleaning, or if your pet's mouth is already healthy, your veterinarian can recommend preventative measures to help slow tartar buildup and prevent gingivitis from starting between checkups. These might include:

- ◆ A diet especially designed to assist in maintaining dental hygiene.
- ◆ Safe dental chew toys that are designed to help remove plaque.
- ◆ Brushing your pet's teeth several times a week with a toothpaste designed for them – remember, human toothpaste is toxic to pets!
- ◆ A water additive that works like human mouthwash, only designed to be safe for pets to swallow.

Make dental health part of your pet's preventative health-care. Regular wellness checkups include checking your pet's mouth for signs of dental problems, so don't put it off! They give us so many reasons to smile, so this August, let's think about making them smile.

Source: <http://lakeforestac.com/news/smile-february-is-national-pet-dental-health-month>

August is all about Dental Awareness



Our Vets can help identify if your pet has dental disease.

15% discount on all dental procedures.
Discounts also available on dental products
and dental revisits. (available only between 1/8/15 and 31/8/15)

Brushing your dog's teeth – how to do it.

Brushing your dog's teeth isn't just about fresh breath. It's an essential part of good oral care, and good oral care is important to your dog's overall health. Prevention is the key to keeping him healthy and happy.

When to Do It

It's ideal to brush your dog's teeth daily, just like you brush your own. However, if your schedule doesn't allow that, aim to brush your dog's teeth at least several times a week.

What You'll Need

The Brush and Paste

Choose a tool that you're comfortable using. Port Kennedy Veterinary Hospital carries toothbrushes for dogs as well as small, plastic brushes that fit on your finger.

Pet toothpaste comes in a variety of flavors, including beef and chicken. Avoid using human toothpaste on your dog's teeth. Keep in mind that your dog will end up swallowing a lot of the paste during brushing sessions, and ingesting a paste made for people might upset his stomach.

How to Brush Your Dog's Teeth

Your dog will probably find the sensation of you poking around in his mouth strange. It might make him nervous at first. However, you can make tooth brushing more pleasant for your dog if you focus on doing two things:

1. Take it slow. Introduce tooth brushing in small steps so that your dog doesn't get overwhelmed and upset.
2. Teach your dog that good things always happen when he gets his teeth brushed.

After you've collected supplies—your dog's toothbrush, his special toothpaste and a few tasty treats—take your dog to a quiet, calm area. You might need to keep your dog on a leash to limit his movement during the brushing session. Make sure there's enough slack in the leash so that your dog can sit or lie down comfortably while you brush his teeth. Then follow the steps below to start brushing.





1. Put some toothpaste on the brush. Placing one hand over the top of your dog's muzzle, gently lift his lips. With your other hand, brush or rub a few teeth. Your dog can keep his jaws closed at this point. Just focus on cleaning the outer surfaces of his teeth and gums.
2. Repeat Step 1 two or three times a day for 1-2 weeks. Each day, slowly increase the time you spend brushing starting with 3 seconds.
3. When your dog seems comfortable about you brushing all his teeth while his jaws are closed, you can start to open his mouth. Gently place one hand over the top of your dog's muzzle and open his mouth, like you practiced before. With your other hand, reach in your dog's mouth with the brush. Brush a few teeth for a couple of seconds. Then release your dog's muzzle, praise him and feed him a treat. Repeat three to five times for about three days. Try to practice a couple of times a day.
4. At this point, you can start alternating between brushing the outer and inner surfaces of your dog's teeth during brushing sessions. It's best to keep brushing sessions short (aim for about 5 min), but brush daily if possible.

Source: <https://www.aspc.org/pet-care/virtual-petbehaviorist/dog-behavior/brushing-your-dogs-teeth>

Tips on How to Keep Your Cat's Teeth

Unlike us, cats can't brush their teeth or find a suitable domestic replacement for chewing on bones and grass — their way of keeping their teeth clean when they're out in the wild.

Here are tips on how to establish good dental hygiene. After all, you want to prevent your feline from having to undergo uncomfortable — and expensive — surgery after suffering in silence.

1 Don't Wait Until It's Too Late

Tooth decay and gum disease have been linked to heart, kidney, and other serious chronic illnesses. Don't wait until your cat shows signs of distress to have his teeth checked out. Many cats do not show obvious signs of discomfort until they're in considerable pain. Preventive care, yearly check-ups, and a good diet can ensure that your cat stays happy and healthy.

2 Give Them Bones to Chew On

Cats are predators, so part of their natural diet consists of hard bones. Bones knock off tartar and help keep teeth and gums healthy. Since most indoor cats don't have access to bones, some veterinarians recommend them as a treat. But, be careful not to give your cat pork, chicken or fish bones. These could splinter and cause severe internal injuries. Raw bones are also better than cooked ones, since they are less likely to splinter.

3 To Treat or Not to Treat?

Tartar control treats and chews are okay in moderation, but they're not sufficient for effectively cleaning your cat's teeth. If, however, you regularly clean your cat's teeth, special food supplements can be a good addition to an already healthy diet. Try using these healthy chews and treats as a reward for good behaviour while getting your cat used to having his teeth cleaned.

4 Good Eats

Diet is another important factor in maintaining your cat's teeth for good health. Besides the variety of feeding your cat a combination of wet and dry foods, you can also include deboned raw meat to stimulate him to chew, which helps to keep the bones strong. Vary the meats, too. Besides fish, you can also feed your cat beef and rabbit.



5 Stimulate Their Gums

Tooth decay usually starts with irritated or inflamed gums, so however you're able to maintain your cat's oral health, don't forget to massage his gums when you can. Not only will this accelerate healing, it will strengthen the gums so your cat will be less likely to suffer from gum problems further on. Gums should normally be pink and healthy, not red in appearance or irritated.

6 Brush Kitty's Teeth

Believe it or not, you can brush your cat's teeth. Toothpaste specially designed for cats is readily available in flavors they'll enjoy. Do NOT try to brush your cat's teeth with "people" toothpaste; if fluoride toothpaste is ingested it can make your cat severely ill. Once your cat is used to the flavor of the "kitty toothpaste," you can cradle your cat from behind, cup his chin, and lift up his lip to clean his teeth using either your gauze covered finger or a kitty toothbrush.



7 Establish a Cleaning Routine

It's not too tricky to get cats used to getting their teeth cleaned. Adult cats are often more resistant, though, so it's a good idea to get them started young. The American Veterinary Medical Association recommends getting cats used to the process while they're kittens by using a finger cot or gauze, along with toothpaste made specifically for cats. You can also try dipping your finger in tuna water before rubbing it on your kitty's gums to make the experience more pleasant.

8 Be Thorough during the Check-up

It's important to let your veterinarian know if your cat has bad breath or is bleeding from the mouth (usually noticeable after eating dry food). Occasional bleeding gums are nothing to become too alarmed about, but if your cat has a combination of bleeding gums and bad breath and these symptoms are accompanied by drooling, then he likely needs a deep cleaning or even a tooth extraction.

Ask your vet to thoroughly check your cat's teeth, gums, breath, and whether the gums are prone to bleeding, swelling or redness.

9 Give Them a Yearly Check-up

Unfortunately, a dental check-up is something most people don't think about as part of the yearly trip to the veterinarian. But, just like people, cats suffer from dental issues that, if unchecked, can lead to serious health problems.

10 Be Vigilant

That mild fishy scent known as "kitty breath" is considered normal. But if your cat has foul breath, this is a strong indicator he's having oral problems. If left untreated, your cat's breath is only going to get worse. Like people, when an animal has bad breath and is drooling, the cause is often related to gum disease and/or tooth decay.

Source: <http://www.petmd.com/cat/slideshows/grooming/top-ten-tips-on-how-to-keep-your-cats-teeth-clean>

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Dog Training Tips

by Sonya Bevan "Dog Charming"

Myth Busting: Positive Reinforcement Only Works for 'Easy' Dogs

Some dogs do not respond to positive reinforcement and need harsher, punishment-based training e.g. shock collars, choker chains, leash jerks, alpha rolls, helicoptering, scruff shaking and physical restraint.

Busted.

All dogs can be trained with positive reinforcement. It is up to the trainer to;

- 1) find out what the reinforcement is that the dog will respond to, and
- 2) set up the environment so the dog is able to respond.



If a hyena can be trained to present a vein for blood drawing using positive reinforcement, well, I rest my case!

Check it out here at Denver Zoo:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bs-tAHqGruY>

This does not imply that all problem behaviours can be 'cured' with positive reinforcement. Behaviour and behaviour change has no guarantees and for complex problem behaviours a thorough assessment by a qualified professional is essential.

Don't know what to do or where to turn? Sonya is more than happy to talk to guardians about the problem behaviours and training concerns they have with their dogs.

Every situation and every dog is different.

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