



IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE



1. WHY DOGS (& CATS) NEED DENTAL CARE TOO

Pet dentistry has become an established aspect of good veterinary care. And for good reason! One of the best things a pet owner can do to insure the overall health of their pet is to do routine checking of the teeth, gums and oral cavity.

2. DENTAL DIETS AND TREATS – DO THEY REALLY WORK?

Most of us are just learning how important dental care is for our dogs and cats. Along with regular oral exams and brushing our pet's teeth, most vets say offering tooth-friendly toys and treats can be a great way to help keep our pet's pearly whites shining.

3. PETS WITH BAD BREATH

Finding yourself in the firing line of a dog with bad breath is enough to send you reeling. What causes bad breath and when does it need professional attention.

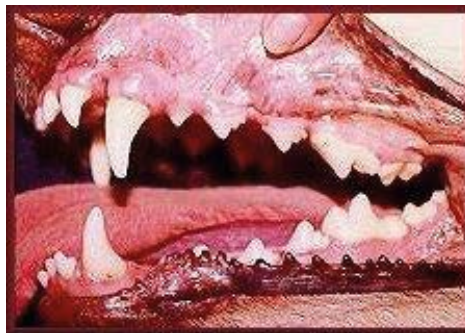
4. HOW TO KEEP FAITH WITH YOUR PETS UNTIL THE END

All of us pet owners will one day find ourselves standing on the razor's edge of a decision: To let a pet go, or keep fighting.

WHY DOGS (& CATS) NEED DENTAL CARE TOO

Pet dentistry has become an established aspect of good veterinary care. And for good reason! One of the best things a pet owner can do to insure the overall health of their pet is to do routine checking of the teeth, gums and oral cavity?

Take a look at the two photos below -- one shows a healthy state of oral hygiene (image 1), and the other (image 2) ... well, you can see for yourself that this dog has some major problems.



A healthy mouth with normal bacterial flora and sound gums and minimal plaque buildup.

The dog in the second image runs the risk of toxin absorption into the blood stream. Bacteria, too, can invade the body through the blood stream by gaining entrance into the oral lesions. This is called bacteremia.



An unhealthy oral cavity with all sorts of unfavorable bacteria, gum and inner lip ulcerations, receding gums, root exposure and plaque buildup.

If the bacteria get a chance to settle and reproduce in the lining of the heart or heart valves, a serious condition may result called bacterial endocarditis. Kidney damage and joint problems are a common sequel to bacterial invasion via the unhealthy oral cavity.

What Veterinarians Can Do

What if a 7-year-old dog was presented for annual vaccinations and during the physical exam the veterinarian notices the plaque on the teeth and inflamed gums at the margins of the teeth and gums?

If left to its own evolution, the dog's gingivitis and plaque would worsen over time. The dog would eventually develop cavities in the teeth, gingival recession, bacterial contamination, loose teeth and root exposure. It probably would hurt, too!

Typically, the dog would be admitted in the morning after an overnight fast from food and water. If the routine blood tests are normal and the dog is judged to be a good candidate for anesthesia and dentistry, we can begin.





There are various pre-anesthetic sedations that are utilised, depending on the dog's size and the veterinarian's preference. After the dog is relaxed general anesthesia will be applied. This, too, can be in various forms. In this case, we will discuss using an endotracheal tube, which is regulated throughout the procedure so that work can be done painlessly and still have the patient at a safe level of anesthesia.

An ultrasonic instrument is used to separate the plaque from the teeth. It sprays cooling water at the time it works its cleaning magic on the teeth. After the teeth are "scaled" a light buffing is done to polish the teeth.

As the dog awakens, the endotracheal tube is removed and antibiotics are prepared for administration at home for 7 to 10 days. Further instructions are given to the owner as to beneficial oral care for the dog. Hopefully s/he won't need further dentistry; but there are some patients who need ultrasonic cleaning almost every year.

Be sure to take a good look in your dog's (or cat's) mouth and inspect it for any foul looking or smelling characteristics. If you are suspicious that something isn't right, make an appointment with your veterinarian for a dental checkup.

Both you and your pet will feel better when oral hygiene is an important part of your pet health care routine. There is no excuse for allowing a pet's oral health status to deteriorate to conditions like the dog on the right. It's up to you to keep a look-out for teeth and gum problems.

Source:http://www.petmd.com/dog/grooming/evr_dg_pet_dentistry?page=2#

DENTAL DIETS AND TREATS – DO THEY REALLY WORK?

Most of us are just learning how important dental care is for our dogs and cats. Along with regular oral exams and brushing our pet's teeth, most vets say offering tooth-friendly toys and treats can be a great way to help keep our pet's pearly whites shining. But which treats, chews, and toys really work?

For some pet's a prescription dental diet such as Hills t/d may be recommended to keep your pet's teeth and gums healthy and clean. Ever wondered how they work and what you can do to get the most out of your pet's dental diet? Here's some information and tips so you can achieve the best results.

Firstly products such as t/d have specifically formulated kibble (the individual biscuits). The kibble features a unique shape,



texture and composition to encourage chewing rather than swallowing. This mechanical action created by chewing provides a gentle abrasive on the teeth during chewing, helping to breakdown the bacteria that make up plaque. Furthermore specific active ingredients and nutrients help reduce gingivitis.

AUGUST IS PET DENTAL HEALTH MONTH!

Remember when your veterinarian recommended a dental cleaning...?

**Psst...
now's the
time!**

**AUGUST
DENTAL SPECIAL!**

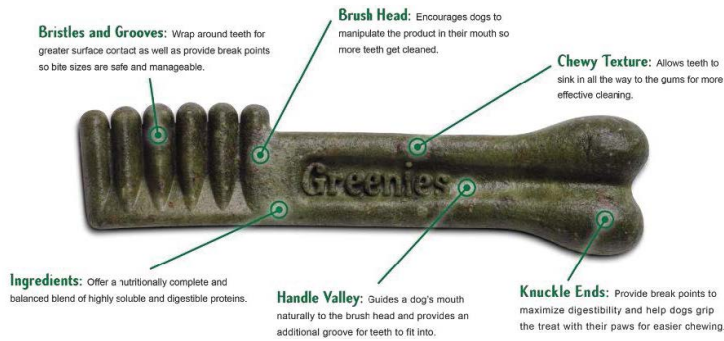
10% OFF

**On ALL DENTAL
PRODUCTS & HILL'S t/d
Dental Prescription Diet**





A wide variety of dog dental treats, e.g. Greenies, can also assist in reducing plaque and tartar or improving breath.



If you are feeding your pet a prescription dental diet here's some tips we recommend you follow:

- Dental diets are effective in maintaining clean teeth. If your pet's teeth are discoloured or show signs of plaque then they need a dental check-up and possibly a dental scale and polish prior to commencing a dental diet (unless specified by your vet).
- The proportion of t/d or similar used for your pet's diet will vary according to the severity and persistence of their dental problems, check with your veterinarian for the correct diet for your pet.
- Mixing t/d with other biscuits or food will reduce its effectiveness.
- For absolute best results feed on a daily basis as a sole diet. Veterinary dental diets are formulated to provide a balanced diet.
- If your pet also has 'wet' or other food, it is critical that you feed t/d at the end of each meal. Just like we (humans) brush our teeth after eating.



Following these simple tips will help you to achieve the best results from using a dental diet to keep your pet's teeth healthy and clean.

Source: <http://pets.webmd.com/dogs/features/dental-foods-treats-dogs>
<http://adelaidevet.com.au/dental-diets-do-they-really-work>

PETS WITH BAD BREATH

Dogs love to dig up old bones, sneak food from the cat bowl or scavenge partly decomposed scraps from the compost bin. This behaviour may cause temporary bad breath, which is not a serious problem, but prolonged bad breath can be a sign of underlying health problems in need of urgent professional attention.

Causes of bad breath

Signs of a healthy mouth include pink, flattened gums, no tartar buildup, even gum line and no broken or damaged teeth. Dental problems, like tartar buildup, gum disease and loose and diseased teeth, are the main reasons for bad breath in dogs. Partly decomposed food particles remain in the mouth after eating, creating the perfect breeding ground for oral bacteria.

Decomposed food, bacteria and minerals combine to form plaque, which can be seen on the sides of the teeth as a thin brownish-yellow layer. It's this plaque that causes bad breath.

Other causes of bad breath include infected oral tumours, abscesses and some systemic diseases such as liver and kidney problems.

Gum disease begins along the tooth root margin. Tartar buildup can cause the gums to become reddened and inflamed and in severe cases bleeding can occur, making it easy for bacteria to enter the blood stream.

One of the main concerns is that bacteria in the blood can settle somewhere else in the body, for example in the valves of the heart, and this could lead to endocarditis (inflammation of the lining of the heart cavity and valves) which is potentially fatal.

Gum disease and dental infections

Gum disease has the potential to affect the health of major organs, but the reverse is also true. Familiarising yourself with the health of your dog's mouth and teeth is the best way to prevent major organ diseases.

Teething puppies can have temporary bad breath. Sometimes they can develop a bacterial infection if they have retained deciduous teeth. This can lead to overcrowding, where dirt and debris can become caught between the teeth which can be a bit smelly.

Excessive drooling can inflame the outer lip, but the problem should resolve itself once teething has finished, she said. She advises concerned dog owners to visit their vet for a thorough dental check-up.

Oral tumours and abscesses can cause foul-smelling breath and facial swellings. If the dog had an infection, you might see swollen gums and maybe pus coming out, and sometimes they can have a swelling on their face, under the eyes, from an infected tooth. Immediate extraction of the tooth under an anaesthetic is required.



If the dog is going to have dental work done, the vet will place the animal on antibiotics before the surgery because the work itself can disturb the bacteria and cause bleeding, which means bacteria could get into the blood stream.

How to treat and prevent bad breath

An annual visit to the vet for a dental check-up is recommended unless the animal has a history of dental problems, then probably twice a year. Prescription diets designed specifically to help battle dental problems as well as raw vegetables, like carrot or turnip, a nylon bone, rawhide or enzyme-impregnated products also help maintain good dental health.

Enzymes work by attacking the bacteria on the teeth and mouth, therefore reducing the buildup of tartar, she explained. Enzyme-enhanced products include mouthwashes; gels, which can be placed on the inside of the lips; and gums or toothpastes, which can be brushed onto the teeth or rubbed on with a cloth.

Toothbrushes and toothpastes specifically designed for dogs are available on the market. Never use human toothpaste because it contains components that are not suitable for animals. The success of teeth brushing depends on the temperament of the dog and how early daily brushing are introduced.

Early disease detection

Bad breath may be a sign of serious health problems. Knowing what's normal in your dog's mouth is essential for early detection of disease. Weekly oral examinations and an appropriate diet, occasional dental treats and, if your dog tolerates it, daily teeth brushing are the best ways to keep your dog in excellent condition. This means fewer visits to the vet for expensive dental work and no more smelly breath from your beloved pooch!

Source: <http://pets.webmd.com/dogs/features/dental-foods-treats-dogs>

HOW TO KEEP FAITH WITH YOUR PETS UNTIL THE END

By Dr. Martyn Becker

All of us pet owners will one day find ourselves standing on the razor's edge of a decision: To let a pet go, or keep fighting.

Sometimes pets have left this life without any decision being made. Often this is highly traumatic and without warning, as when a pet is lost in an accident or dies very suddenly of a disease of injury.

But in most cases, we have warning that life, or quality of life, is slipping away. We may react with denial, cheating our pet of the last grace because we can't face reality. We may react by giving up too soon, forgoing treatment that could keep our beloved pet with us in comfort for weeks, sometimes years.



And sometimes, the most blessed of times, we find ourselves reacting just the right way. Giving our pet just the right amount of time, medical care, comfort and love until the day comes when we find ourselves giving them the gift of release, with them as safe in our arms as they have always been. We're not often lucky enough to have the last. We shouldn't feel guilty or anger that we don't always get it right. As a veterinarian, I can honestly tell my clients when "it's time", and I don't always know it myself about my own pets. Welcome that certainty when it happens, but don't expect it, or beat yourself up if you don't have it.

Because there's one thing I know without a doubt: Your pet will forgive you if you get it wrong.

Source: Dr. Marty Becker

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