



## PETS NEED DENTAL CARE, TOO.™

For most of us, caring for our teeth and gums has been part of our daily routine for as long as we can remember. Just like you, your pet needs dental care, too – regular, professional care from your veterinarian and home care from you to keep plaque removed. Daily brushing and feeding special pet foods can help.

### Causes of periodontal disease

Plaque is a colourless film that contains large amounts of bacteria. If left unchecked, plaque builds up, creating infection, destroying gums and resulting in the loss of the tissues and bone that support the teeth. Preventive oral care can reduce the formation of plaque and help maintain proper oral health throughout your pet's life.

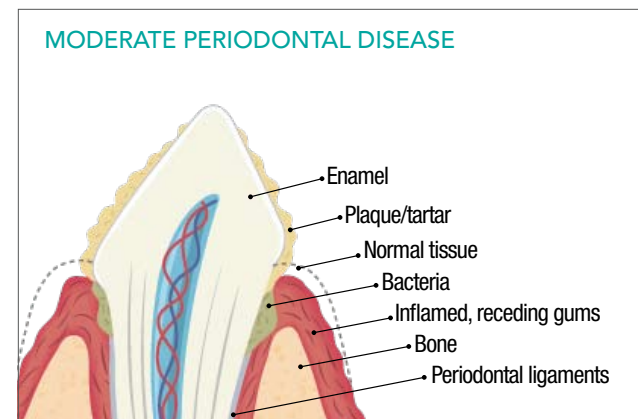
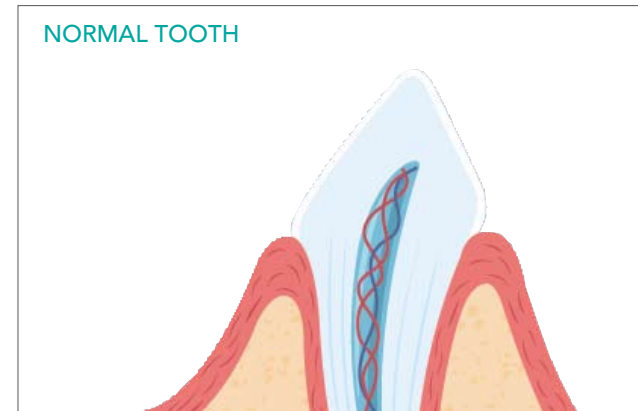
### Signs of periodontal disease

All pets are at risk for developing dental problems. Once your pet displays any of the warning signs below, serious periodontal disease may be present. Don't wait for these signs. Start a preventive program of veterinarian-supervised dental care today.

- Bad breath
- Yellow-brown crust on teeth
- Bleeding gums
- Going to the food bowl, but not eating
- Change of chewing or eating habits
- Tooth loss
- Subdued behaviour
- Abnormal drooling
- Dropping food out of the mouth
- Swallowing food whole

### Contributing factors

- **Poor oral hygiene**  
Ignoring the condition of your pet's mouth can lead to periodontal disease, tooth loss and other serious health problems, such as heart, liver and kidney failure.
- **Breed**  
Periodontal disease is more common in smaller breeds of dogs and certain breeds of cats.
- **Age**  
Periodontal disease is more common as pets grow older.



### Oral Health for Overall Health

Proper oral care isn't just good for the mouth – it's good for the whole body, too. Poor dental health, on the other hand, can put your pet at risk for heart disease, kidney disease or even diabetes. Here's how:

- **Plaque builds up on a pet's teeth**
- **Bacteria in the plaque irritate the pet's gums**
- **The irritated gums bleed, allowing bacteria from the plaque to enter the bloodstream**
- **Bacteria in the bloodstream travel throughout the body, and can negatively impact the heart, liver and kidneys**

Emerging science suggests a strong link between good oral health and reduced risk of heart, liver and kidney disease.

Pets with poorly maintained teeth and gums also run the risk of experiencing several other serious health problems:

- **Painful dental infections**
- **Tooth loss**
- **A taxed immune system, which limits a pet's ability to fight disease and infection**

To prevent any of these problems in your pet, make sure to provide good dental hygiene. Talk to your veterinarian for more information.

### TIPS ON BRUSHING YOUR PET'S TEETH

- Introduce a brushing program gradually and early; training may take several days or weeks.
- At first, dip your finger into beef bouillon for a dog or tuna water for a cat, and rub your finger over the pet's mouth and teeth.
- Make these initial sessions brief and positive.
- Introduce gauze on your finger with the same beef or tuna flavor and begin rubbing the teeth in a circular motion.
- Before graduating to a soft-bristle toothbrush, put a small amount of toothpaste specifically designed for pets on your finger and allow the pet to taste it.
- Finally, apply a small dab of pet toothpaste on a moist toothbrush and allow your pet to lick the bristles. Begin brushing gently at a 45° angle away from the gumline.
- Please note: Toothpaste designed for people contains ingredients that may upset your pet's stomach.



### STEPS TO BETTER ORAL CARE

#### 1. Visit your veterinarian

Every regular exam in our clinic includes a thorough dental exam. If we find signs of disease, we will recommend a treatment plan. It is important for the overall health of your pet that we take care of any dental problems we find. We will also recommend a home care plan that is a key part of keeping your pet healthy.

#### 2. Start an oral care routine at home

Plaque should be removed from your pet's teeth every day, before it mineralizes into tartar. Brushing your pet's teeth properly each day will remove plaque buildup. In addition, you can feed specially formulated foods that help reduce the accumulation of plaque and tartar from teeth. Ask us about the best methods of home care for your pet.

#### 3. Schedule regular dental checkups

We monitor the progress of your pet's preventive program, so regular dental checkups are essential, just as twice-a-year checkups are important for people. For pets who form tartar quickly or those with a history of oral problems, frequent examinations and cleanings may be advised.

For more information, visit [PetDental.ca](http://PetDental.ca)