

# TAKING CARE OF THOSE TEETH



**Dogs have 42 adult teeth.**

**Cats have 30 adult teeth.**

But unfortunately by the time most pets become mature the effects of periodontal disease have already “taken root” and tooth loss becomes commonplace. Periodontal disease is a slow developing condition of mouth that involves a bacterial infection of the gingiva (gum tissue), attaching ligaments to the teeth, and the bone surrounding the teeth resulting in loss of not only infected teeth, but the neighboring teeth as well. The effects of periodontal disease can also extend beyond the mouth and result in heart disease, kidney failure, and irritation to the liver.

Fortunately periodontal disease is a preventable and treatable condition.

## Signs of Periodontal Disease

- Purulent exudate (pus) around the tooth
- Persistent bad breath
- Gums that are inflamed or bleed easily
- Pain or sensitivity around the mouth
- Pawing at the mouth
- Loose or missing teeth
- Loss of appetite or indigestion
- Drooling
- Difficulty chewing or eating
- Irritability or depression

## **Treatment**

It all starts with consulting with your veterinarian and having your pet’s mouth examined for evidence of periodontal disease. If your pet has periodontal disease then a professional dental cleaning procedure will be scheduled. Because this is an anesthetic procedure, pre-anesthetic blood testing needs to be performed to ensure that your pet is healthy and antibiotics will be started to address the bacterial infection. Once under anesthesia we will perform a complete examination of the mouth and determine an appropriate level of treatment for the periodontal disease. A routine dental cleaning involves removal of tartar, polishing, fluoride application, and a complimentary Oravet application. Treatment of periodontal disease can involve cleaning the tooth root surface, instilling antibiotic gel into infected pockets, and performing dental extractions as needed. We provide the safest anesthesia and pain management protocols, provide intravenous fluid support, and our patients are closely monitored while under anesthesia by our experienced veterinary support staff.

## **Prevention**

Whether your pet is 8 weeks or 8 years old, your role in the prevention of periodontal disease is vital. Prevention requires a combination of regular dental cleanings (once a year is the goal) and home care. Home care is directed at slowing plaque and tartar formation and preventing gingivitis that is the foot-hold that periodontal disease requires.

### **Basic home dental care tools include:**

- **Brushing the teeth** - Cleaning with pet safe toothpaste & toothbrushes ever other day is ideal (this is the best prevention & with patience any pet will learn to enjoy – we can show you how)
- **Oravet** – Easily applied once weekly to the teeth & will significantly slow tartar formation
- **Foods** – Special formulations that slow tartar development, like the Science Diet T/D that we carry
- **Water additives** – Adding this product to your pet’s water can slow tartar formation
- **Chews & Treats** – Greenies & special dental chews formulated with enzymes that fight tartar are easy to use for both dogs & cats

Our goal is to bring your attention to the importance of periodontal disease and the impact it has on our animal family members. It is an established fact that the prevention and treatment of periodontal disease in your pet(s) will keep them healthier and allow them to live longer.