



February is Pet Dental Health Month Flip the Lip!

How is your pet's smile? If you haven't seen their teeth lately, it's time to "Flip the Lip"!! Periodontal disease is a serious problem in our companion pets, affecting over 85% of pets three years and older. If your pet has bad breath, red or swollen gums, yellow-brown tartar on the teeth, loose or missing teeth, decreased appetite or difficulty chewing, it's time for an oral health exam, prophylactic cleaning and possibly dental treatments.

February is Pet Dental Health Month and Edinburgh Pet Health Center wants to remind all pet owners that periodontal disease is not just about clean teeth. Bacteria and infection in the mouth contribute to mouth pain and will also lead to problems in the heart, kidney and liver. Since most pets do not show ANY obvious signs of dental pain, we must be very diligent to look for it whenever possible.

Periodontal disease is best prevented. Treatment can only slow the progression of the disease, it cannot reverse bone loss that has already occurred. The mainstay of prevention is tooth brushing, followed by the use of Oravet sealant, dental diets, oral rinses, safe chew toys, regular pro-



February is National Pet Dental Health Month
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phylactic cleanings and now, the use of a special vaccine that targets the Porphyromonas bacteria in the mouth.

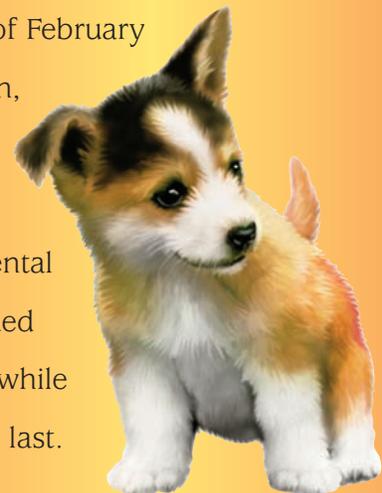
We can help assess your pet's risk of periodontal disease and help you decide on the best prevention plan. Small dogs, older dogs and breeds with crowded teeth will have a greater risk. Cats are generally prone to not only periodontal disease, but also resorptive lesions that cause cavities and oral pain.

So, for Valentine's Day this year, flip your pet's lip and take the steps necessary to bring back a winning, pain-free smile.

Special Offer!

In addition to our "goodie" bag given to pets that have had their teeth cleaned, dogs having a prophylactic cleaning in the month of February

or March, will be given a Kong dental toy, valued at \$15, while supplies last.



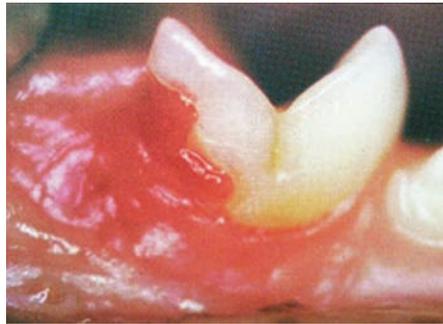
THE DEATH OF A TOOTH



Teeth are subjected to many abuses. The main culprits are injuries due to chewing on hard bones, kennels, rocks and other inappropriate objects and infection secondary to fractures and periodontal disease. Many times, tooth loss or removal is inevitable.



End-stage periodontal disease causes significant bone loss due to infection. This progresses to the point of tooth loss, as either the tooth falls out or it is extracted. This is a painful and drawn out problem for pets, because they are unable to tell you they hurt. It is not uncommon for us to see a pet for a teeth cleaning and during the oral exam find a significant amount of loose, diseased teeth. Intra-oral x-rays will show the extent of bone loss and the need for extraction.



In cats, **resorptive lesions** occur when the body attacks the enamel of the tooth. We do not know what causes this in cats, but it is a very painful condition. As the tooth is eaten away, the pulp becomes exposed. Generally, these teeth cannot be saved and should be extracted or have the crown amputated to relieve the pain. Intra-oral x-rays are very helpful in documenting the extent of the destruction.



Fractured teeth are very common. Dogs are not very discriminating when it comes to objects they put into their mouth. In addition, many people continue to feed hard bones to their dogs, despite the fact that they can easily fracture the teeth. When a tooth fractures, the pulp may be exposed. The pulp is the

nerve and blood supply to the tooth. Once bacteria enter the pulp chamber, infection can set in. This is another painful condition for the dog to bear. In these cases, extraction or a root canal is needed to prevent further problems.



Occasionally, a pet will injure a tooth but without any sign of a fracture. If the blood supply is disrupted, the tooth may **discolor** to various shades of pink and purple. This is a sign of a dead tooth. Treatment is either extraction or root canal. In many cases, a root canal is the preferred treatment, as it will preserve the tooth's functionality in the mouth. This is especially true for the bigger, more important teeth, such as the fourth upper premolar, lower first molar or the canine teeth. We routinely refer our patients to the University of Minnesota's veterinary hospital dental service for root canals.

We can prevent tooth death through good home care and avoidance of hard objects that will damage the teeth. Rawhides, Kong Toys and other soft chew items are considered safe in most instances and will also help to keep the teeth clean.

Bring back the Smile!

These pets all benefited from dental prophylaxis, restoring white teeth and a pain-free mouth. Your pet will too!!



Before

Kirby

After



Before

Oliver

After



Before

Peanut

After



Toys for Teeth

Safe chew toys for dogs should be made of substances that are not as hard as the tooth itself. Hard bones and nylabones will fracture teeth, creating the need for root canals or extractions.

Rawhides, firm rubber toys such as the Kong toys, and securely made soft toys provide a safer chewing experience for most dogs. Greenies® have been formulated to be more digestible for dogs, but may not provide a long enough “chew time” to help actually clean the teeth.

Kong dental toys are designed to allow toothpaste to be placed in and around the grooves, to help clean the teeth as the dog chews.

Other chew items such as pig’s ears and other animal parts should be evaluated for hardness on an individual basis before using. Many dogs enjoy their chew toys and when used properly, can



help maintain dental health as well. Cats do not have as great a need for chewing but there are special cat chews available to help keep teeth clean. We carry a CET brand chew that many cats enjoy.

New! Canine Periodontal Vaccine

Another tool for fighting tooth loss

A conditionally licensed vaccine is now available to help prevent periodontal disease by reducing the amount of bone loss surrounding infected teeth. It has been shown to be a safe vaccine and ongoing studies should demonstrate that the vaccine is an effective and useful adjunct for dental disease control. It is a Porphyromonas bacterin, which is a vaccine effective against a special type of bacteria, found in plaque deposits. It is NOT a substitute for tooth brushing, dental cleanings or other homecare practices. However, it may limit the amount of bone loss and subsequent tooth loss, which causes pain in our affected dogs.

We anticipate that dogs with ongoing periodontal problems will benefit the most from vaccination. Small breed dogs, older dogs and dogs with pre-existing dental problems should have an oral exam done to assess the risks and benefits

of vaccinating for periodontal purposes. All dogs could potentially be good candidates for vaccination.

Two doses of the vaccine are given three weeks apart. Vaccines should be given to dogs whose mouths are clean and uninfected. If periodontal disease is already present, a prophylactic cleaning

should be done in conjunction with the vaccinations to get the best results. Revaccination intervals are not yet established, but we expect that yearly vaccination may be needed for some dogs.

Even with vaccination, we anticipate that tartar and plaque will still develop to some degree. It is important to realize that the vaccine is only part of a comprehensive plan to help keep periodontal disease at bay. Regular homecare with tooth brushing, sealants and special diets are very important to maintain oral health.

There is a potential for side effects of vaccination, however, the vaccine has been shown to be very safe and adverse effects are rare.

Call to schedule an exam and see if this exciting new technology can benefit your dog.



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