



IMPORTANCE OF DENTAL CARE

Our pets are living longer now than in the past. Today, we have better preventative medicine along with improved diagnostics to treat many diseases.

Oral disease is now the number one health problem diagnosed in pets! It is essential to provide our pets with sufficient dental care, both professionally and at home.

The cause of periodontal disease (gum disease) is the same in dogs and cats as it is in humans. It is an infection resulting from the build-up of soft dental plaque on the surfaces of the teeth around the gums. The bacterium in plaque irritates the gum tissue; if that plaque is allowed to accumulate, it leads to infection in the bone surrounding the teeth.

Your pet may be letting you know that they are headed in this direction. There are certain warning signs you can watch for:

- **Halitosis**, bad breath, is the most common effect noted by owners.
- The gums become irritated, leading to bleeding and oral pain. Your animal may lose his/her appetite or drop food from their mouth while eating.
- Excessive drooling and/or pawing at the face/mouth.
- Swelling under the eyes - this may indicate a **tooth root abscess**.



As a pet owner you can help prevent periodontal disease in your animal.

- **Oral exams by your veterinarian at annual visits.**
A thorough exam can identify potential problems such as fractured or Abscessed teeth and periodontal disease.
- **Chew Toys.**
Our pets' teeth are much more sensitive than humans and have 50% less enamel coverage. Kong toys, Greenies or Pedigree dentabones that soften as the dog chews are good options.

- **Brushing your pet's teeth.**

Bacteria and food particles combine to form plaque. If plaque is not removed, mineral in the saliva combine with the plaque and form *calculus*, also known as tartar, which adheres strongly to the teeth. The tartar is irritating to the gums and causes an inflammation called *gingivitis*.

Using a toothbrush/paste formulated for animals should be used. Human toothpaste contains fluoride that is unsafe for our animals to digest.

- **Feeding a hard/dry diet.**

Dry food, biscuits, and newly-formulated abrasive diets can be beneficial in removing plaque above the gum line. Discussing nutrition with your veterinarian can help decide which food is best for your pet.

At Newtown Veterinary Hospital we have the latest technology and equipment to offer your pet quality dental care.

General anesthesia and pre-surgical blood work are required for this procedure to ensure the safety of your pet during this procedure to ensure the safety of your pet during this procedure.

A dental cleaning consists of:

- **Ultrasonic scaling** to remove the plaque and tartar from the teeth above and below the gum line.
- **High water powered flushing and dental rinses** are used to remove bacteria from the mouth.
- **Fluoride treatment** is placed to strengthen the teeth and help decrease the rate of plaque reattachment.
- **Digital dental radiographs** are taken to examine the teeth below the gum line. This tool will help determine if extractions are necessary by showing the roots of the teeth. If extractions are necessary, these are done with high-speed drill and dental equipment. Post-extracted gums are closed using absorbable suture.

