



Latrobe Veterinary Group

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Client Information Sheet

DENTAL DISEASE

Looking in your animals mouth is probably something you don't do very often, but you should. Approximately 80% of dogs and 70% of cats show some signs of oral disease by the time they are 3 years old. The build up of plaque, tartar and bacteria on teeth and gums can lead to quite severe dental disease in animals. Dental problems such as tartar happen as a result of poor oral hygiene. Tartar is a build up of plaque around the teeth, mainly close to the gum line, which can eventually lead to gingivitis (a gum disease, inflamed and red gums) and periodontal disease – more advanced stage of gingivitis involving degeneration of bone causing teeth to loosen. Dental disease is also a cause for bad breath. Some of the signs of dental disease are yellow-brownish teeth, which are usually a build up of tartar, bleeding gums and a change of chewing or eating behaviour which may not only affect their mouth, but also lead to damage of other organs such as liver, kidneys and heart.

The good news is that dental disease can be preventable. By using a range of products available including dental chews, dental diets, brushing your dogs teeth and feeding bones (NOTE: NEVER feed an animal cooked bones as these may splinter causing much bigger problems!!) If the situation has progressed a dental clean and scale may first be required, performed by your veterinarian. See below for further information or talk to our helpful staff. If you are concerned about your animals teeth bring them in for a check up and our veterinarians will be able to advise you on what is best to use for your pet.

PRODUCTS

Dental Chews

There are 2 types of chews we have available from our clinic. These are enzedent chews and greenies. Both of these products have been designed as 'treat' type chews that dogs and cats love to eat, but also help clean their teeth at the same time. Remember 'treats' often include extra calories so don't feed these too often.

Dental Diets

Hills t/d is a specially formulated "teeth diet." This food contains special enzymes which assist in the removal of existing tartar and plaque as well as a prevention of further build up. It is a dry food which comes in small or large bite sizes. It can be fed solely or in addition to normal diets.

Science Diet oral care is another diet made specifically for oral care. This is another complete dry food which will prevent tartar build up but unlike Hills t/d will not remove existing tartar.

Cleaning Teeth

Yes it sounds silly but this is often a good way to keep teeth clean by removing plaque and thus helping to prevent dental disease. In most animals it is not as hard as you would think. It has to be introduced slowly-initially using your finger with flavoured water/soft food on it and working up to using a finger brush. Special enzymatic (animal) toothpaste needs to be used (not human toothpaste) to keep your pets mouth sparkling and clean. The toothbrushes and toothpaste are available from both veterinary clinics. Talk to our staff for further information.

Dental Clean, scale and polish

In more severe cases it may be necessary to discuss having a 'dental' procedure done at the veterinary clinic. Generally your animal will have a visit with the veterinarian first to determine how bad your pets teeth are. Some animals with more severe gingivitis may be required to be on antibiotics prior to the dental procedure to minimise infection. Your animal will need to stay in hospital for the day and have a general anaesthetic so that we can adequately clean their teeth. In most cases all they will need is a clean, scale and polish. If your animal fits this criteria and only needs a simple clean, scale and polish you may be eligible for our special dental day package-ask us for more information if interested. In cases where teeth are rotten or damaged they may need to be removed. We are not always able to tell this until we can examine your pets mouth under the general anaesthetic. Whilst the dental procedure will clean your pets teeth now it is extremely important to think about ongoing care of their teeth and prevention of dental disease with some of the aforementioned methods as a dental procedure should only be a last resort. Preventing dental disease is a much better approach.



