

Don't...

-  Think of Dentistry as being trivial or cosmetic. It can be vital for the overall health and well-being of your pet
-  Ignore bad breath - it is often a sign of gum disease. If treated early most serious problems can be prevented
-  Ignore broken teeth. These always cause pain and infection. Properly treat or remove is the rule
-  Use human toothpaste for pets. It is not designed to be swallowed and pets won't spit and rinse!
-  Leave any signs of dental disease for another day - it will only get worse and be more difficult to treat

Pet Smile Month

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Prevention - Better than Cure!

The gold standard for plaque removal is the use of a toothbrush daily. An oral hygiene cloth can be a good starting point. It is essential to use a special toothpaste - it is flavoured for pets and can be safely swallowed.



Special Diets

There are a number of diets with "dental claims". Check with your vet which ones they recommend, only some are proven to work.

Special Additives

Dentagen Aqua can be added to the drinking water and helps to disrupt the formation of the plaque biofilm. PlaqueOff is a seaweed extract that may also help reduce plaque.



Special Chews

A lot of research is underway to develop some cat chews that are just as effective as the chews that are available for dogs. Your vet will be the first to hear when these are available.



Pet Smile Month would like to thank our supporters - without whose help we could not provide this level of health support for UK pets and their owners.



UNSEEN DANGER



Dental Disease is not just about the mouth - it represents a whole body problem.

Bacteria spread via the bloodstream from the mouth to affect other organs. The kidneys and heart valves in particular may be affected.

Our aim at Pet Smile Month is to help raise awareness and combat this most common of problems.

Visit our Website for more information

www.PetSmile.org



Simple Solutions








- Regular Dental Examinations
- Follow recommended treatment
- Prevention is then key to Good Health
- Toothbrush if possible
- Use the Hygiene Cloth
- Special tasty toothpaste
- Special Dental Diets
- Daily Dental Chews

Do...

 **Lift the Lip of your cat every day.**

 Check both sides of the mouth

Look for any signs of dental disease:


-  Redness or swelling of the gums
-  Bleeding from around the teeth
-  Pain or reluctance on examination
-  Bad or smelly breath
-  Red spots or holes in teeth
-  Loose, broken or discoloured teeth
-  Pawing at the mouth


 Remember that cats will continue to eat - even with horrible dental disease

 Have a go at toothbrushing - many cats will tolerate it, especially if you start as a kitten

 Use special diets designed to keep the teeth healthy. Check with your vet which ones are best for your cat

 Use dental chews and special food or water additives as recommended by your vet

 Have regular dental check-ups at your vet. You may be able to combine these with worming, vaccinations and flea treatment

 Ask your vet about x-ray screening to check for FDRLs - this will help to avoid missing diagnosis of this very common problem.

How to Examine Your Cat's Mouth

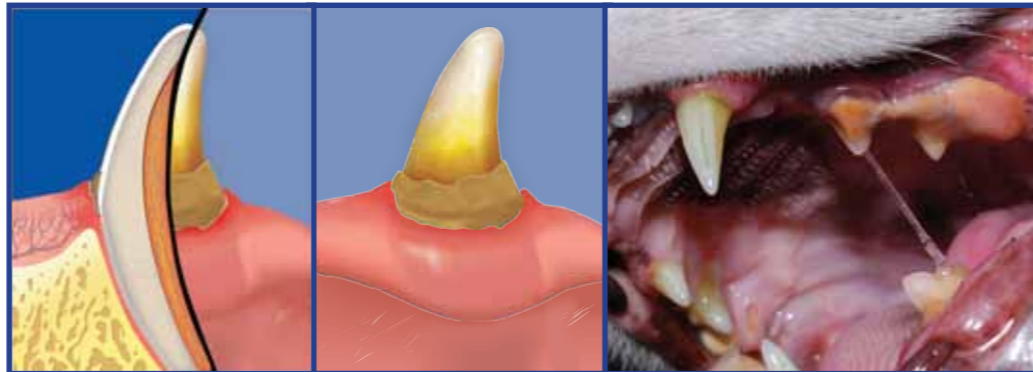


First of all give reassurance. Then gently place your hand on the top of her head, use your thumb to gently raise the lip to expose the cheek teeth.



Gently rotating your hand will tip the nose up and backwards. This will automatically open the mouth slightly. Examine the front of the mouth and don't forget the other side!

Calculus - Tartar



Minerals from the saliva combine with plaque to form stone-like calculus. Its rough surface encourages more plaque retention, inflammation increases and periodontal disease starts attacking the attachment of the tooth. The bone support for the tooth is attacked - eventually the tooth is lost.

Feline Gingivitis and Stomatitis



This picture to the left shows gingivitis, around the calculus deposits on the teeth. The bright red angry colour can be compared with the pink skin tones of the examiner's fingers.

The pictures below illustrate how in cats this can often escalate to Stomatitis - or a whole mouth inflammation. This is intensely painful and often needs specialist investigation and treatment.



Feline Dental Resorptive Lesions

FDRL's are very common in cats. They represent an active process eating away at the tooth (unlike the passive rotting of teeth in caries). They always produce pain. Unfortunately, except in very early cases, removing the affected tooth is required. Destruction of the root, leads to loss of the crown.



FDRL's can look like holes in the teeth - typically at the gum junction. They can also appear as extra blobs of gum on the tooth. X-Rays are essential to avoid missing diagnosis and leaving a painful problem untreated. Many vets are investing in Digital radiography to improve their care.

