

Dental Health Facts

Dog Dental Facts



- > Puppies have 28 temporary teeth that erupt at about three to four weeks of age. They have 42 permanent teeth that begin to emerge at about four months.
- > Symptoms of periodontal disease in dogs include yellow and brown build-up of tartar along the gum line, inflamed gums and persistent bad breath.
- > Broken teeth are a common problem, especially among outdoor dogs. According to veterinary dental experts, aggressive chewing on hard objects, such as commercially available cow hooves, is a primary cause of broken teeth in dogs.

Cat Dental Facts



- > Kittens have 26 temporary teeth that begin to erupt at about two to three weeks of age. They have 30 permanent teeth that erupt at about three to four months.
- > Symptoms of periodontal disease in cats include yellow and brown tartar buildup along the gum line, red inflamed gums, and persistent bad breath.
- > Resorptive lesions are the most common tooth disease in domestic cats. Studies show that about 28 percent of domestic cats develop at least one of these painful lesions during their lifetime.

Oral disease is the most frequently diagnosed health problem for pets

- > An astounding 80 percent of dogs and 70 percent of cats show signs of oral disease by age 3, according to the American Veterinary Dental Society (AVDS).
- > Periodontal disease is a common problem in dogs, particularly smaller breeds.
- > Cats can develop painful resorptive lesions. Studies show that about 28 percent of domestic cats develop at least one of these painful lesions during their lifetime.

Oral disease begins with a buildup of bacteria in the pet's mouth

- > Bacteria, combined with saliva and food debris between the tooth and gum, can cause plaque formulations that accumulate on the tooth. As bacteria grow in the plaque and as calcium salts are deposited, plaque turns to tartar.

- Bacterial plaque is the most important substrate in the development of periodontal disease. The inflammation and destruction that accompanies periodontal disease results from the direct action of bacteria and their by-products on periodontal tissues as well as the indirect activation of the host immune response.
- Without proper preventive or therapeutic care, plaque and tartar buildup leads to periodontal disease, which affects the tissues and structures supporting the teeth. Left untreated, periodontal disease can cause oral pain, tooth loss and systemic complications.
- Tartar has a contributory role due to its roughened surface, which enhances bacterial attachment and further plaque development, and also irritates gingival tissues.

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Pet owners should look for warning signs of oral disease

- Common indications of oral disease include bad breath, yellow or brown tartar accumulation on the tooth surfaces, and/or bright red or swollen gums



- If any of these signs are present, the pet should be taken to the veterinarian for a dental exam.
- Broken teeth are a common problem, especially among dogs. According to veterinary dental experts, aggressive chewing on hard objects, such as commercially available cow hooves, is a primary cause of broken teeth in dogs.

The good news is that pet owners can reduce the risk of oral disease by following AVDS recommendations

- The first step in preventing oral disease is a routine physical examination including a dental exam.
- Pet owners should practice a regular dental care regimen at home, which may include brushing the pet's teeth with specially formulated toothpaste. It's best to start early, but grown dogs and cats can learn to tolerate brushing. Toothpaste for humans is not recommended because it may upset the pet's stomach.
- Schedule regular follow-up care with your family veterinarian.