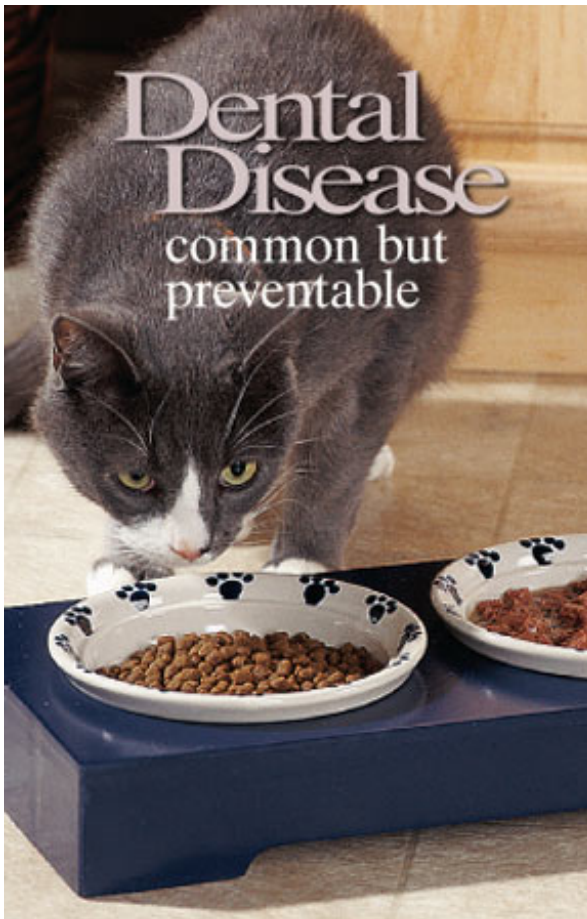


Dental Disease: Common but Preventable

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff



WE RECOMMEND

[Dental Clens® Pads](#) destroy odor-causing bacteria in your cat's mouth.

The [Cat Dental Kit](#) gives your cat some of the basics for an at-home brushing routine.

[Feline Greenies](#) are hard treats made with real meat and oat fiber.

Eric was a cat with an eating problem. He became more and more fussy until, one day, he refused to eat hard food altogether. Marie, his owner, thought he was just being finicky, so she fed him the soft food that he would still eat. It wasn't until Eric's annual checkup that the real problem was discovered. His veterinarian pointed out his red gums and informed Marie that Eric was on his way to serious dental disease. Dental care is a frequently overlooked aspect in cat healthcare. In fact, dental disease is one of the most common disorders affecting cats.

Development of dental disease

When your pet's teeth are not given proper care, dental disease develops as follows:

Food particles and bacteria collect along the gumline, forming plaque.

If plaque is not removed, minerals in the saliva combine with the plaque and form tartar (or calculus), which adheres strongly to the teeth.

The tartar causes an inflammation called gingivitis, which can be seen as reddening of the gums adjacent to the teeth. It also causes bad breath.

If the tartar is not removed, it builds up under the gums and separates the gums from the teeth to form "pockets," encouraging even more bacterial growth.

At this point, the damage is irreversible. It can be very painful and can lead to loose teeth, abscesses, and bone loss or infection.

Luckily, Eric was only in the gingivitis stage of dental disease, a point where the dental damage is somewhat reversible. Marie was told to have Eric's teeth cleaned and to establish a dental program that includes regular visits to the veterinarian for oral exams and cleanings, along with daily home care.

A cat's daily dental routine at home should include tooth-brushing along with use of a chlorhexidine solution to kill mouth bacteria. You may also want to try a treat specifically made for dental health. By establishing a simple, daily dental routine for your pet, you will go a long way toward keeping your cat comfortable and healthy. And you will help eliminate bad breath.