Periodontal Disease & Prevention

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

"Periodontal" comes from two Greek words that mean 'around the tooth.' Periodontal disease is a series of changes that are associated with the inflammation and loss of the deep supporting structures of teeth.

Development of periodontal disease

When your pet's teeth are not properly taken care of, periodontal disease develops as follows:

1. Food particles and bacteria collect along the gumline forming plaque.
2. If plaque is not removed, minerals in the saliva combine with the plaque and form tartar (or calculus) which adheres strongly to the teeth.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. At this point the damage is irreversible, and called "periodontal" disease. It can be very

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painful and can lead to loose teeth, abscesses, and bone loss or infection.

Signs of periodontal disease

As periodontal disease progresses, you may observe the following signs:

- Purulent exudate (pus) around the tooth
- Persistent bad breath
- Gums that bleed easily
- Sensitivity around the mouth
- Pawing at the mouth
- Gums that are inflamed (red), swollen, or receding
- Loose or missing teeth
- Loss of appetite
- Stomach or intestinal upsets
- Drooling
- Difficulty chewing or eating
- Irritability or depression

PREVENTION --- PREVENTION --- PREVENTION

Periodontal disease is **irreversible**. We do not want you or your pet to have to go through that diagnosis. Do not wait. Get your pet on a good dental care program that includes:

- Regular visits to your veterinarian, which include an oral exam
- Veterinary dental cleaning as advised
- Daily home dental care

Your daily home dental care should include toothbrushing along with using Dental Cleanser or Dental Clens® Pads. Also, feed your dog or cat a hard kibble rather than soft foods or table scraps. For dogs, you may also want to offer special dental bones and toys, such as Dental Chews or Quado Bone. By having a simple, daily dental routine for your pet, you will go a long way to bringing your pet better dental health.

View all of our Dog Dental Care or Cat Dental Care products!

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