

# Common Feline Dental Problems

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff



## common feline dental problems

Many cats are prone to chronic inflammatory diseases of the mouth including *gingivitis* (inflammation of the gums) or *stomatitis* (inflammation of mucous membranes in the mouth).

Some breeds, such as Siamese, are more prone to these diseases than others.

**Chronic inflammation** can cause severe pain for the cat. The cat may exhibit unusual behavior such as irritability, aggressiveness, depression, or hiding. Eating behaviors may also change, manifested in excessive drooling, difficulty in eating or not eating. A typical sign of stomatitis is the cat going up to the dish as though very hungry, and then running from the dish because eating is so painful.

**Bacteria** play a major role in the formation of plaque and if a cat's teeth are not cared for, plaque leads to sticky tartar and to more bacteria. Good nutrition and keeping teeth plaque-free through [daily dental care](#) is essential for cats that are prone to stomatitis. This would include brushing and applying a chlorhexidine solution such as [Dental Cleanser](#) or [Dental Clens Pads](#).

Even if your cat is not prone to dental disease, regular dental care is important. It can keep [bad breath](#) at bay and make your cat's life much more comfortable.

Dental care is a frequently overlooked aspect in cat healthcare. In fact, dental diseases are the most common disorder affecting cats. Among dental diseases, Dental Resorption Lesions or Cervical Line Lesions (CLL) is the most common. Various studies have shown CLL in up to 66% of all cats. By providing proper dental care, you can help prevent many dental diseases while keeping your cat happy and pain-free.

### What are Cervical Line Lesions?

CLL are erosions in tooth enamel ranging from slight enamel loss to extensive loss of tooth structure, typically affecting the molars and the premolars. However, any tooth can be affected. If left unchecked, CLL can progress and gradually expose blood vessels and nerves in the teeth. Extraction is the prevalent course of treatment for most cases of CLL. This painful dental disease tends to occur in older cats (over 4 years of age) and may be more common in purebreds, especially Siamese and Abyssinians.

### Prevent CLL with regular dental care

Though CLL is the leading cause of tooth loss in cats, the exact cause is still unknown. [Regular dental cleaning](#) and proper diet can help maintain

### Symptoms of Cervical Line Lesions

*CLL may cause your cat to exhibit one or more of these symptoms:* Changes in or lack of appetite, lethargy, depression, halitosis, drooling, oral bleeding, difficulties eating, and general discomfort.

### Stomatitis & Gingivitis are likely caused by:

- Suppression of the immune system through viruses such as feline leukemia (FeLV).
- Viral or bacterial infections, including calicivirus and feline infectious peritonitis (FIP). [Vaccines](#) are available to help prevent these diseases.
- Allergies to bacterial plaque.

good oral/dental health and minimize dental diseases. Quality dry kibble like our [Adult Cat Food](#) or [Feline Greenies](#) will provide proper nutrients and help prevent tartar buildup.

Provide regular at-home cleanings to monitor dental health and prevent conditions such as CLL from going unnoticed. Aggressive treatments may be avoided if lesions are detected early. Use [Dental Cleanser](#) or [Dental Clens Pads](#) to make dental care easier. Cats with a history of CLL should have their teeth professionally cleaned every six months. Due to the potential difficulty involved in properly detecting CLL, consult your veterinarian to schedule a thorough oral examination.

Though the lesions themselves are not thought to be infectious, secondary afflictions such as severe inflammation of the gums or abscesses may also develop.

**Remember... an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.**