Dental Disease Checklist

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Cats live long, happy lives now because of preventive measures and improved methods of diagnosing and treating feline diseases. Surprisingly, dental disease – which is, to a great extent, preventable – is the number one health problem that veterinarians find during the regular physical examination.

The first condition in a progression of serious, oral changes that occur in the cat's mouth is the presence of plaque. Plaque can be controlled and removed by routine home-care measures, and every cat owner should consult a veterinarian for home dental-care recommendations.

When plaque collects and is not removed, minerals in the saliva combine with it to form tartar. Tartar deposits along the gum line cause the gums to become inflamed, and the resulting condition is termed gingivitis. If the tartar is not removed by professional cleaning and scaling, it continues to collect. The gum line recedes and separates from the teeth, and pockets form. These pockets undermine the roots of the teeth. By this time the damage is irreversible, and the resulting, painful condition is called periodontal disease. It can lead to abscesses, tooth loss, and bone loss. At this stage, bacteria can enter the bloodstream and cause infection of the heart valves, liver, and kidneys.

Check the box beside any symptom of dental disease that you observe in your cat. Schedule an appointment with your veterinarian, and take the checklist with you to the appointment:

- ☐ Persistent bad breath
- ☐ Drooling
- ☐ Inflamed or bleeding gums, or pus around a tooth
- ☐ Tooth loss
- ☐ Loss of appetite or difficulty eating
- ☐ Stomach or intestinal problems
- ☐ Depression

WE RECOMMEND

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Dental Clens® Pads for Cats

Feline Greenies®

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