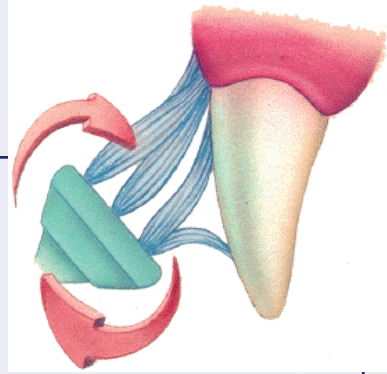


Country Roads Veterinary  
Services, Inc. and Ashland  
Veterinary Clinic

Small Animal Newsletter Oct. 2009

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Full evaluation of oral health in pets generally requires heavy sedation or anesthesia. Anesthesia is necessary for 3 reasons:

- 1) Immobilization to examine teeth and clean below the gum line
- 2) Pain control
- 3) Allows for placement of endotracheal tube to keep bacteria and water out of the respiratory system.

#### Dental Disease.....Did you know?

~More than 85% of dogs and cats over the age of 4 have dental disease!

~Signs of dental disease are: halitosis (bad breath), red/swollen gums, loose teeth, sensitive mouth, broken teeth, drooling, and difficulty chewing (not always!)

~Plaque is created by an accumulation of bacteria, these bacteria in the mouth can be spread through the bloodstream to other organs of the body.

~The crown of the tooth is the part that we can see above the gumline, in pets the root of the tooth is often as large or larger than the crown and can only be examined with X-rays.



Severe tartar, plaque, and gingivitis.

## Dental Complete Oral Health Assessment and Treatment (COHAT) at Ashland Veterinary Clinic

All pets undergoing anesthesia at Ashland Veterinary Clinic will have a complete physical exam, bloodwork (where applicable), IV catheter and fluids, safe anesthetic drugs, and complete anesthetic monitoring of blood pressure, ECG, respiratory rate, temperature, and oxygen levels during the procedure.

The teeth are then examined, the gums are evaluated, Xrays are taken if deemed necessary, necessary extractions are made, teeth are scaled of all tartar above and below the gumline and then polished and rinsed. We are aggressive in pain management before and after the procedure and use antibiotics when indicated.



Cardell Monitor



Dental X-ray showing roots



Pastes & brushes



### Brushing your Pet's Teeth:

Just like for humans; removing plaque from your pet's teeth on a daily basis prevents plaque build-up and tartar.

~Use a soft bristled toothbrush or finger brush and toothpaste from your Veterinarian. (Human toothpaste should not be used for pets.)

~Allow your pet to get comfortable with you touching the mouth and teeth, then allow them to taste the toothpaste, lastly, try brushing.

~For an instructional video, go to [www.virbacvet.com/cet/focus/](http://www.virbacvet.com/cet/focus/)

~Oral rinses and chews with plaque reducing enzymes are also a part of home dental care, but brushing is best!



Before Cleaning, After Cleaning

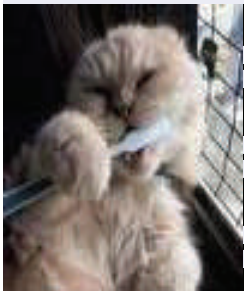
WHEN do my pet's teeth need to be cleaned?

~Teeth should be professionally cleaned at the first sign of dental tartar; if you can see yellow/brown material on the outside of any of the teeth, they should be cleaned.

~Cleaning at the first sign of tartar prevents advanced dental disease, gingivitis, and bone loss.

~Once tartar has been established on the tooth it will only build and get worse with time.

~Depending on the individual pet's mouth, diet, and brushing schedule teeth should be cleaned every 6-12 months after the age of 3. (It is recommended that humans have a cleaning every 6 months... and we brush every day!)



Improving oral health between dental cleanings:

- 1) **Brushing** the teeth is the single most important thing you can do to decrease plaque, tartar, and dental disease in your pet!
- 2) A product called OraVet can be applied to the cleaned and polished teeth following the COHAT procedure. This is a special coating that works to reduce plaque. This can also be applied periodically at home to clean teeth.
- 3) Special dental pet foods are available that help break down plaque and tartar. Dry kibble in general is much healthier for the teeth.
- 4) There are also mouth rinses and dental chews with special enzymes to break down plaque available.





### Fractured Teeth:

Teeth can be broken through trauma, chewing, or play. Broken teeth are often very painful and can be a source of infection, especially if the pulp cavity is exposed. Some chewing bones and toys can help reduce tartar, but can also harm or break teeth. Consult your veterinarian about safe chew toys. Never throw dense bones or heavy objects for your pet to catch in their mouth!

### Feline Dental Disease:

Many cats are afflicted by FORD or Feline Odontoclastic/Resorptive Disease. Common signs are red and inflamed gums, oral pain, decreased appetite, weight loss, and lethargy. The body attacks the roots of the teeth. This disease is extremely painful and requires veterinary intervention!



Keeping your pet healthy and happy from tooth to tail is our goal! Please feel free to discuss your pet's oral health with us if you have any questions or concerns.

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