

Tooth Problems in Cats and Dogs

Dogs and cats can suffer from major tooth problems which can go unnoticed for some time, due to their inability to tell us! It is up to us as responsible pet owners to regularly check the health of our pet's teeth. This is easier said than done when some pets do not let you open their mouths, but persevere because we know only too well how much pain tooth problems can cause. If your pet suddenly goes off its food it could be a sign of painful teeth or gums.

Gingivitis is a condition mainly seen in cats and smaller breed dogs, but can affect any breed. It is a minor gum infection with major gum inflammation and, if left untreated, can lead to the removal of teeth.

Tartar is the result of a build up of waste matter in the body. The wastes are dissolved in the body fluids including saliva, which deposits debris when it washes over the teeth. These wastes are a result of feeding too much food or the wrong food. Your pet requires a balanced diet with no artificial colours and preservatives and that is not bulked out with cereals that it doesn't need. A veterinary's intervention may also be needed to se-scale the teeth, removing the build up of tartar.

To prevent the build up of tartar and the onset of gingivitis it is best to follow a good dental hygiene regime.

The first thing to look at is diet, a good quality, natural food will prevent the build up of waste products.

Secondly, regular weekly cleaning of your pet's teeth. There are special toothbrushes available or rubber thimbles that go on your finger, that can be used to clean the teeth. There are a variety of pet toothpastes available, ask your pet shop for details. One that we have just found is Dorwest Herbs, Roast Dinner Veterinary Toothpaste. It is abrasive with a meaty flavour and is low-foaming causing less stress to your pet.

If your pet has a build up of tartar on its teeth then a homoeopathic remedy called *Fragaria 3c* (Dorwest Herbs) – made from wood strawberry – can be given on a daily basis to soften the tartar and aid its removal, and given on a weekly basis it can help prevent the formation of more tartar. If your pet is suffering from gingivitis then a treatment of Garlic & Fenugreek tablets (Dorwest Herbs). This is an ideal traditional herbal remedy for the relief of minor infections.

As well as toothpastes and herbal treatments, there are also toys designed to help clean the teeth as the dog chews, for example – the Dental Kong. Other ideas are the occasional bone (not cooked ones as they are too brittle and are dangerous), Snak Attaks which are filled cattle bone that are beneficial to the teeth and have the added bonus of keeping your dog amused for hours.

As long as you get into a routine of regularly checking and brushing your pet's teeth, and feeding a natural balanced diet, then your pet's teeth should stay in good health and they will be happy.

Happy Brushing!

Protect your pet with knowledge

Julie Pickering

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