

The Importance of Dental Health and Your Pet

Just like eating nutritious food and getting enough exercise, your pet's dental care is an important part of their overall health. However, if your dog or cat goes too long without having their teeth cleaned, it could lead to serious issues down the road.

By the age of three, 70% of cats and 80% of dogs show signs of gum disease, which can lead to tooth loss and infections that can spread to their internal organs. To prevent these types of issues, prioritizing your pet's oral health is key.

Signs of Dental Issues in Your Pet

The signs of oral hygiene issues in your dog or cat can range from small to severe. Sometimes these issues can manifest in changes in your pet's behavior, including showing signs of irritability. Be careful when evaluating your pet's mouth because an animal in pain may bite.

Symptoms of Dental Issues in Cats and Dogs

- Bad breath (halitosis)
- Drooling
- Change in chewing habits
- Discolored teeth
- Reduced appetite
- Swelling around the mouth
- Tooth loss
- Bleeding gums

Making Dental Care a Priority

There are different ways you can work to give your pet the best oral care, and it depends on what works for you and them. Here are some ways you can make sure your pet's teeth stay clean and healthy.

Brushing their teeth

The single most effective way to keep up your pet's oral hygiene is to brush their teeth. Pet-specific toothpaste was designed with them in mind, made safe enough to swallow, and available in flavors like beef or poultry.

If possible, introduce brushing during your pet's training, so it becomes a natural part of their routine. Regardless, when beginning to brush their teeth, you should take small steps to get them used to it. For example, letting them taste the toothpaste first allows them to get used to the flavor, and holding the pet toothbrush against their teeth lets them get accustomed to the texture and feel.

Incorporate other dental products

There are many options for food for both dogs and cats designed to help fight tartar and plaque. Treats, additives, and sprays or gels are also available for both species, as well as rawhide chews for dogs.

Since it's hard to know which products are effective and which aren't, it's important to check in with your pet's veterinarian to make sure any new products you introduce are good for them.

Professional dental cleanings

If brushing your pet's teeth yourself isn't possible, there's always the option of having their teeth cleaned professionally at your veterinarian's office. Usually, pets will need to be put under anesthesia for this process to allow for a thorough cleaning.

Start Right Away!

The best time to start this process is right away to ensure total oral health, but you may want to reach out to your veterinarian to see what the best approach is. Schedule an appointment with Peninsula Pet Clinic to discuss the best dental plan for your pet.

If your pet needs emergency treatment, give us a call and come to our office for immediate help with no wait time! We're open seven days a week to help with any and all of your pet's veterinary needs.