

Henlow Veterinary Hospital

DENTAL DISEASE

Dental Treatment and Prevention

WHAT is Dental Disease?

Dental disease is one of the most common conditions found in dogs and cats. It causes discoloured teeth and smelly breath, but if left untreated can lead to gum disease and rotten teeth.

The bacteria involved can also travel via the bloodstream to the kidneys, liver and heart and cause serious illness. For this reason we strongly recommend good dental hygiene from an early age.



ORAL HYGIENE Gels & Dental Toys

These are applied either directly to the mouth or to the food.

They give some of the antibacterial effects of toothpaste but obviously cannot give the physical effect.

However, for some pets this is a good option if they don't tolerate brushing.

Dental Toys can give some of the mechanical cleaning effect but tend to be chewed in the same part of the mouth all the time so their effect is limited.

BRUSHING

The best method to prevent dental disease in cats and dogs is regular brushing. The enamel on your pet's teeth is thin so it can be easily damaged; therefore it is important to use a toothbrush that has soft bristles.

There are several different styles of tooth brushes- such as small ones you can place on your finger tip or other ones with handles that come in a variety of sizes. Pets also need special toothpaste, as they do not spit it out but swallow it instead.

Fluoride, which is found in human preparations, will not be metabolised by your pet and may cause irritation to the liver. Our toothpastes have enzymatic properties which help breakdown food before the bacteria can use it, so these toothpastes are still beneficial even if you just place some onto the animal's teeth without a toothbrush. They also directly kill bacteria.

Currently, the recommendation is to brush your pet's teeth at least three times a week, ideally every day, for the best results. We recommend:

Start slowly- get your pet used to having their teeth examined and touched. Once this is okay (this may take weeks) introduce the toothpaste on your finger. Only when your pet will tolerate this should you move onto brushing. You also only need to do the outside of the teeth.

A nurse can provide a demonstration on request.

Special DIET

These are specially designed to rub the plaque off. The individual pieces of food are made more fibrous so they do not shatter when bitten, instead the tooth penetrates and as it does so the deposits of tartar are rubbed off the sides of the tooth.

For animals where brushing cannot be carried out, (e.g. some cats) this is the next best method of preventing plaque build-up. Hills t/d is a specially designed dental diet which is completely balanced, and is effective if used as at least 1/3 of your pet's daily ration.

Hills Vet Essentials is also designed to clean teeth. Using t/d and brushing together will really improve dental health.



Please note, some pets may require a dental de-scale and polish annually to remove tartar in order to prevent the need to extractions.

By cleaning your pet's teeth regularly you will help reduce the build-up of plaque and tartar that can lead to dental disease, meaning you pet may not need a dental procedure so frequently.

If you have any questions about your pet's treatment, please feel free to ask any member of staff.

What HAPPENS During a DENTAL OPERATION?

- We will give your pet a full examination on the morning of the procedure including heart, respiration rate and temperature checks.
- Throughout your pet's dental both a vet and nurse are present, and your pet will be fully monitored both during and post anaesthesia while they recover.
- All cats and dogs have an intravenous venous catheter placed. Through this they may receive their pre-medication, pain relief, and anaesthetic. They also benefit from intravenous fluids during their anaesthesia at no extra cost; if undergoing a lengthy dental procedure.
- We have an up to date ultrasonic dental machine, so we can scale and polish and your pet's teeth before we fully examine the health of each tooth.
- We also have a dental x-ray machine which gives us more information on teeth and roots of concern
- If any teeth need to be removed we use additional local anaesthesia to reduce pain after surgery.
- Once up and awake and ready to return home, all animals who have had extractions receive ongoing pain relief (and antibiotics if appropriate)
- We then schedule a post op check with one of the nurses to see how your pet is doing and check healing if teeth have been extracted
- The following morning we call to see how they are, and we encourage you to get in touch if you have concerns or questions.
- We offer 24hr care and have staff available whatever time you need us.

