

Dental Disease

What is Dental Disease?

Dental disease (also called periodontitis or periodontal disease) is inflammation and infection of the gums, and potentially bone, surrounding your cat's teeth. Most cats (70%) will have some degree of dental disease by 3 years old, and many need professional dental cleaning by age 7. It is difficult to see the early signs of dental disease, so many cats don't receive care until severe disease is present. Seeking care for dental disease when it is found reduces pain, and reduces the cost of care in the long run.

Why are Dental Cleanings Important?

If left untreated, dental disease can become extremely painful and contribute to conditions like heart disease and kidney failure. Severe dental disease can also result in infections of the liver, GI tract, and kidneys. Your veterinarian can assess your cat's teeth and recommend any treatments needed to keep your pet healthy and pain-free.



Advanced Periodontitis

In this cat, the chronic bacterial infection associated with untreated dental disease is destroying the gum, tooth and bone. The mouth is painful, affecting eating and behavior. Bacteria can then enter the bloodstream and affect other organs.

How can You Prevent Severe Disease?

A dental exam is part of your cat's annual exam and your veterinarian will help you make a home care plan that is right for you and your pet. Home care, like brushing and proper diet, can improve your pet's quality of life and reduce the cost of dental care in the long run.

What about free-roaming or feral cats?

In free-roaming cats, or cats that otherwise would not tolerate handling, caregivers can monitor for signs of dental disease and seek veterinary care if they notice weight loss, reluctance to eat dry kibble, face pawing or drooling.

How can Your Veterinarian Help?

A veterinarian will be able to evaluate your pet's teeth and recommend whatever treatment is needed. Make sure that you contact a veterinarian if you see signs of dental disease like bad breath, red gums, and changes in eating or face pawing. Regular dental cleanings will help prevent severe dental disease.

