



Bayswater Veterinary Clinic
35 Alexander Street, London, W2 5NU
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www.bayswaterveterinaryreferrals.co.uk

Dental Disease in Cats and Dogs

Dental disease affects 90% of cats and 75% of dogs over 3 years of age. Damage to the teeth is irreversible and infection in the mouth can enter the blood risking further infection of the kidneys, heart, and liver.

Dental disease is hard to diagnose because our pets carry on as normal and do not yelp out in pain. In older pets, we often put it down to old age.



Some animals chew on one side of their mouth, lose weight, groom less and generally fail to thrive.



Signs of Dental Disease

Bad breath (Halitosis) is caused by bacteria in the saliva and on the teeth.

Tartar is a brown covering that can be seen over the teeth. This occurs when bacteria causes the plaque to become mineralised.

Gingivitis (inflammation of the gum) is in turn caused by plaque and tartar. The gums appear red and sore and they often bleed when touched or at the time of eating.



Peridontal Disease occurs with the chronic build up of tartar and gingivitis. This causes infection in the tissue surrounding the tooth, causing the tooth to become loose and eventually fall out.



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The Vet's Role

The vet will perform a full clinical examination to assess your pet's general health as well as an assessment for fitness for anaesthesia if a dental procedure is necessary. The vet will assess the oral cavity giving a score for the amount of tartar and gingivitis, checking for lost teeth and gum recession.

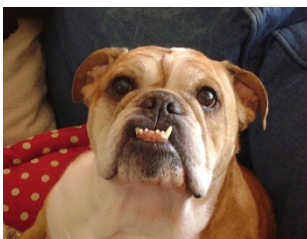


The vet also looks for gum lesions such as over growth (hyperplasia), oral masses like Epuli (a benign and harmless gum lesion) and for more sinister masses such as oral cancer.

Cats can develop 'neck lesions' (also known as Feline odontoclastic Resorptive Lesions) which are common but very painful. Teeth fractures can be subtle and if extending into the pulp cavity can also be very uncomfortable.



Some animals retain their baby (deciduous) teeth which can also lead to problems in later life.



Vets can check for malocclusions where the teeth are not properly aligned. This is usually a cosmetic problem but can be a problem if the teeth dig into the gums or the hard palate.

Preventative Dental Care at Home

DIET

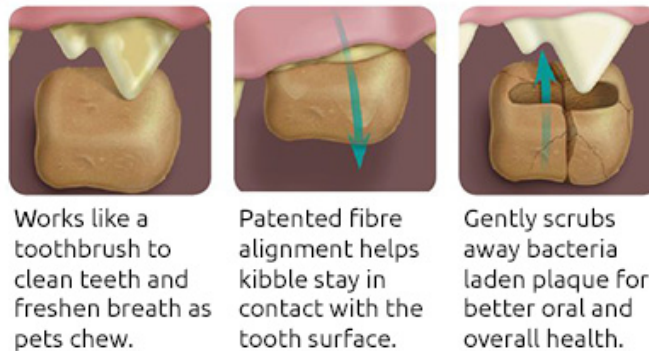
We advise feeding a commercial diet rather than a raw food diet. Dry food tends to be better than wet food as this food can stick to the tooth.





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Some diets are especially designed to improve dental health. The **kibble size** is enlarged and often has '**anti-breaking**' technology which means the tooth will penetrate the biscuit before breaking therefore scraping the plaque off the tooth. Other food contain a **calcium binder** which prevents the formation of tartar, other contain enzymes which break down plaque.



Chews can be useful even though cats do not tend to take to them. Always ensure the chew is the correct size for our pet.



DO NOT feed bones. Cooked bones will splinter and can cause gut problems. Raw bone can chip enamel and cause physical trauma to the tooth.

TOOTH BRUSHING

This is the gold standard of dental care. Starting at a young age and making it a part of the daily routine will give you the best results. Pet toothpaste **MUST** be used because of the flavour of human toothpaste and the fluoride content- our pets cannot spit out the toothpaste! A child's toothbrush or finger brush can be used.





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Do not start brushing if there is gingivitis as this will be painful for your pet and may create an aversion to brushing and contact with the mouth.

PLAQUE OFF

This is a powder that can be added to food. It contains a selected Alga that helps to reduce plaque forming bacteria.

MOUTH WASH

The majority of mouth washes are antibacterial so aim to decrease the amount of plaque in the mouth. These should be used as a complimentary treatment alongside tooth brushing.

ROUTINE CHECKUPS

We advise bringing in your pet every 6 months for a routine dental check. This is especially important in older animal over 7 years of age.

Please do not hesitate to contact Bayswater Referral clinic if you have any further questions.

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