

## Does Your Pet have Dental Disease?

Dental disease is a bacterial infection of the mouth. There are four stages of periodontal disease, progressing from plaque and mildly inflamed gums (from not routinely brushing) to established gingivitis (gum disease), and then on to mild and ultimately severe periodontitis, which may involve bone and/or tooth loss.

But with a good at-home dental care routine and regular professional dental cleanings, you can help prevent your pet from getting dental disease.



## Looking for Signs of Dental Disease in Pets

Flip your pet's lip, and ask yourself these questions:

1. Does your pet have stinky breath? "Dog Breath" and "Fish Breath" are NOT healthy!
2. Does your precious pet have red or swollen gums?
3. Are your companion's teeth yellow or brown? Loose or missing?
4. How's the appetite—still a chow hound? Different? Having trouble chewing bones?
5. Any difficulty picking up food?
6. Weight loss? Or generally just "acting older" or "slowing down"?
7. Dogs that have a health weight of 25 pound or less need MORE dental care than larger dogs

If you answered "yes" to any of the above questions, your pet could have periodontal disease. But don't worry, help is here!

## Problems with Dental Disease in Pets

1. Pain and discomfort
2. Loss of appetite and muscle loss from inadequate nutrient intake
3. Infection and inflammation in the mouth that spreads to other organs and body feedback systems. Dogs with dental disease are significantly more likely to have heart disease.

## Preventing Dental Disease At Home and At the Vet

Periodontal disease can be prevented, treated and even reversed if caught early. Together, you and your veterinarian can protect your faithful friend against the havoc of periodontal disease by remembering the following:

- Brush your dog's teeth daily to help reduce plaque, a sticky film that contains bacteria. Be sure to use toothpaste that is formulated for dogs. Make it FUN and not scary for your pet. And be patient.
- Visit Creekside Veterinary Hospital for regular professional dental cleanings AND x-rays. This will reduce bacteria and help guard against periodontitis and will allow us to treat painful detrimental disease before your pet shows signs
- Give your dog OraVet Chews. Consider dog or cat food specially formulated to address dental disease. Make your pet a CHIP Plan Member so that we can help you take the best care.

## Need Information About the Best Way to Prevent Canine Dental Disease?

- [Vohc.org](http://Vohc.org) - or call us any time!