

However, dog toothpaste **MUST** be used as **fluoride is poisonous to dogs.**

Come in for a dental check and we can teach you how to do effective brushing.

Another great way of preventing tartar build-up is for them to chew on dental sticks, biscuits and toys. These work by rubbing off plaque and cracking off tartar to slow the progression of dental disease. Try to stick to special dental products and avoid things like bones which can fracture your pet's teeth.



Finally, there are also dental paste solutions which can simply be added to fresh drinking water and help to dissolve the plaque.

Dental Grading

In order to help you understand the way we grade your pet's teeth we use the following grading system:

- 0 - no changes/no gingivitis
- 1 - some gingivitis but no intervention needed
- 2 - scale and polish
- 3 - some extractions
- 4 - complex extractions

The grade of your pet's teeth will be recorded as part of your pet's history on our patient information system and we will inform you of this grade.

Consulting Times

Freckleton Surgery

Monday
9am to 8pm

Tuesday
9am to 6.30pm

Wednesday to Friday
9am to 7pm

Saturday
9am to 1pm

Blackpool Surgery

Monday
9am to 10.45am & 2pm to 6.15pm

Tuesday to Friday
9am to 10.45am & 2pm to 6pm

Saturday
9am to 10.30am



DENTAL CARE AND PREVENTION

Rowan Veterinary Centre
"where pets come first"

Hillock Lane
Freckleton
Preston
Lancashire
PR4 1TP

The Old Bank
369 Whitegate Drive
Blackpool
FY3 9PH

www.rowanvets.co.uk



Dental care and prevention for your pet

Most of us brush our teeth at least twice a day, use mouthwash, floss and chew gum all as part of our daily routine. Yet dental care is something we are all guilty of neglecting in our pets. It is no surprise that 85% of cats and dogs have periodontal disease.

Periodontal disease is disease of the teeth and their surroundings structures such as gums, and can present as a wide array of problems from gingivitis (inflammation of gums) to severe tooth root abscesses.

Dental disease can be really painful for pets and



unfortunately they are very good at hiding their pain. Some signs of dental disease include obvious changes such as difficulty chewing, bleeding gums and drooling, to more subtle signs like bad breath, ulcers and chipped teeth. However, these signs only present at advanced stages of dental disease so to catch the early changes your pet needs a dental check every 6 months—just as we do! At Rowan we offer this service FREE OF CHARGE!

So, how do pets get dental disease? In the wild, animals obviously do not frequent the pet dentist twice a year.

However, what we have to remember is that regardless of the diet and lifestyle we give our pets, they are domesticated animals. Age, breed and lifestyle are all important factors to the speed and onset of dental disease. As with humans, decay of teeth increases with age but this doesn't mean that you don't have to take care of your pet's teeth when

they are young. Prevention of periodontal disease is most definitely better than cure. We also find that the speed of decay is much quicker in smaller breeds such as Yorkshire Terriers and Jack Russell Terriers.

In terms of lifestyle, pets which eat wet food diets will be much more susceptible to tooth decay and those who chew dental sticks and rawhide chews will be much less prone. The key is to prevent plaque attaching to the teeth long enough to turn into tartar.

Plaque is an off-white sticky material made up of food particles and bacteria. It builds up on teeth immediately after

eating and is the fundamental cause of periodontal disease. Luckily, it can be removed by light scraping and hence we can prevent tartar build up with the right intervention. Tartar is the hard, dark material that builds up on teeth and is formed when saliva washes over the teeth and mineralizes the plaque. It can form within 48 hours and unfortunately can only be removed by scaling.

Once tartar is established on teeth, the tooth itself can begin to eat away and the gum regresses to expose the root. We have four stages of dental disease, from sore, inflamed gums to exposed or abscessed roots. However, all you need to understand is that without appropriate dental care your pet is likely to be left with painful teeth and smelly breath!



As tartar can only be removed by “scaling”, any periodontal disease requires a “dental”. A dental is the term we use to describe any dental work from a scale and polish to complex

extractions. To be able to work in animals mouths though, we need to give them a full general anaesthetic in order for them to stay still. We also do this to allow us to place a tube in their throat to help them breath and prevent any of the dental fluids running into their lungs. A “scale and polish” is where we scrape all the tartar off the teeth and clean underneath the gum. We then polish the teeth to create a nice smooth surface which is easier to keep clean. This is why we like to scale and polish teeth at the first sign of disease, before they get to the stage where they need extractions. Cats and dogs have teeth

with very large roots, much larger than ours, which are designed for tearing meat. The part of the tooth that we see is just the tip of the iceberg. This makes them very

difficult to remove and takes a long time. The longer a dental is, the greater the anaesthetic risk.

After dentals, pets often require soft food for a couple of days and in many cases, antibiotics and painkillers are required. Ultimately, dental work can be very pricey and prevention is definitely worthwhile.

Most importantly **then**, how do we prevent periodontal disease? First things first. Dental checks are **FREE** so we can catch any problems early. Ideally, dental care should be started from a young age and not just as disease is beginning to progress. In dogs, there is a lot you can be doing. Brushing is the best thing if your dog will allow it. This is best introduced when your dog is young in order to allow them to accept it as part of their routine. You can get special doggy toothbrushes or simply use a human one.