



Oral Care in our pets

One of the major foundations of health is a healthy oral cavity. This is the place where nourishing the body begins as food is taken in and begins to be broken down and digested making valuable nutrients available.

In our modern world, dental disease is one of the biggest dis-eases affecting our furry friends. Sore teeth and gums are not only uncomfortable but set up a cascade of events that lead to further deterioration of our pets' health.

With improper dental hygiene, excessive amounts of unhealthy types of bacteria accumulate in the mouth, attaching to tooth surfaces which leads to the formation of dental calculus or tartar. These provide a greater surface area for more bacteria to accumulate in ever deepening pockets where toxins are produced and more bacteria multiply leading to gum inflammation or gingivitis and is usually the origin of putrid smelling breath.

Bacteria then have the potential to enter the bloodstream and to lodge in major organs such as the heart, kidneys and liver leading to organ failure or systemic infections. In its attempt to prevent this from happening, the body launches its next line of immune defense.

The constant battle between the body's immune system and these invading bacteria drains the body of important resources and the inflammatory cycle that is set up causes the production of free radicals which act like hot cinders flying off a home fire into the surrounding carpet do and cause cellular damage. Together with the local tissue destruction, this cumulative damage, over time can contribute to systemic degenerative diseases such as cancer and auto-immune disease.

There are many commercial foods, chew toys and even pet toothpastes and toothbrushes advertising their essential contribution to your pet's health. But despite this, dental disease still proliferates and often painful and diseased teeth need to be extracted and vets routinely do annual tooth scaling and polishing under anesthetic to help maintain a healthy oral cavity.

Common signs of dental disease include bad breath, red gums, the avoidance of harder foods, repetitive lip licking, drooling and sometimes weight loss, increased drinking and lethargy.

Dogs and cats have sharp triangular teeth and jaws designed for cutting, dicing and crushing, not for chewing as herbivores such as horses and ruminants that have large flat teeth with jaws that grind from side to side do.

When our pets are fed a healthy well balanced diet containing fresh raw meat and raw bones from a young age, as Mother Nature intended, dental disease is rare and generally only occurs in the form of broken teeth due to trauma.

With a well balanced diet the body will have a normal pH and the right nutrients available to ensure that minerals in saliva are available to maintain and repair teeth and that the mouth environment is inhospitable for the proliferation of pathological (disease causing) bacteria. Good dental care, which includes care of your whole animal will add many quality years to your pet's life and is an investment which is well worthwhile. It's never too late to start!