

Hillcrest Veterinary Clinic
3083 Point Marion Road, Morgantown WV 26505 Phone: 304-292-6933
www.hillcrestveterinaryclinic.com

Canine and Feline Periodontal Disease

How often do you look inside your pets' mouth? Probably not nearly as often as we should. Starting as a puppy we should be checking their mouth on a daily basis to not only desensitize them for further activities with the mouth, but to check the teeth and make sure that they are developing properly and that the adult teeth are coming in correctly and pushing out the deciduous (baby) teeth. At this time we should be introducing the toothbrush and brushing of the teeth to the puppy. Was your puppy never introduced to a toothbrush or teeth brushing? It is never to late to start.

Periodontal disease will affect each and every dog and cat at some point in his or her life. Studies have shown that periodontal disease is one of the most prevalent diseases in dogs, as well as cats. *Statistically 80% of dogs and 70% of cats show signs of periodontal disease by age 3, and 28% of cats can develop painful resorptive lesions during their lifetime.* And for the majority of pets it can be reduced or avoided in entirety, it just takes prevention on our part. Brushing the teeth twice daily is the absolute best prevention possible, but not all pets will allow you to do so, but it is still recommended to try and get the pet to accept the brushing. But even if you are unable to brush their teeth, there are other products available for periodontal health. Dental chews, toys, rinses, periodontal specific diets, oral rinses, water additives are just a few. And the ultimate ingredient in these products is **chlorhexidine gluconate**, which binds with plaque and tartar to help remove buildup.

When talking about periodontal disease we need to factor in diet as well. The diet we feed needs to be well balanced. Lacking in nutrients such as protein, carbohydrates, calcium, phosphorus, and vitamins are all essential. Speak with your veterinarian about what diets are best for the well being of your pet. And always avoid feeding table scraps or human food, because it can increase the build up of plaque and tartar.

Periodontal disease not only leads to a foul smelling mouth with dirty looking teeth, it can also affect the vital organs of the body. These organs can include the heart, liver, and kidneys but are not limited to them. It is often that we will see a patient presented that will have one or more of these diseases and have severe periodontal disease. The periodontal disease may not have solely caused the organ disease but it has definitely intensified the organ disease and made it harder for the body to function properly. A bacterium in the mouth is constantly circulating through the bloodstream via entrance of the gums and circulates through the heart, liver and kidneys and then attacks those areas. Often those organs are trying to fight off the bacteria that is circulating throughout them causing excessive work and damage.

Periodontal disease is classified in Five stages. To see if your pet has periodontal disease, have it examined by a veterinarian. They will recommend proper methods of action to prevent further disease.