



Packerland

VETERINARY Center, Ltd. www.packerlandvet.com

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PAWS

February is National Pet Dental Month: and it gives us a great reason to provide more benefits to you and your pet.

For starters you will receive **10% OFF YOUR ENTIRE DENTAL PROCEDURES INVOICE**. For those of you who bring in your pet during February for a dental cleaning, there is the chance to win a gift basket worth \$70. There will be one winner for cat owners and one winner for dog owners. Historically, the clinic books up quickly in February, so call in to make your appointment today. We have included some great information in this issue of PAWS and there is more information on the web site in the Advanced Dental Procedures section.

Interesting Facts

- Dental disease is the number one health problem in felines
- 50% of cats over 5 years of age have some type of dental problem
- 85% of all dogs and cats will contract dental disease by the age of three
- 95% of all pet owners do not brush their dog or cats teeth



PLAQUE

Plaque is the underlying cause of gum disease, so preventing plaque build-up is the first step in preventing dental problems. Plaque is composed of food debris, saliva and bacteria. After each meal, plaque sticks to the surface of the tooth, and can only be removed by mechanical means (chewing, scaling or brushing). This is the same process that happens when we eat and don't brush our teeth. If the plaque is not removed, it will calcify into tartar (calculus) and adhere within 48 hours. The calculus that you can see on the teeth allows further plaque build up to occur. Calculus can only be removed by your veterinarian. So your pet's best line of defense is to remove plaque before it becomes calculus.

The plaque that really causes damage to the teeth and gums is found under the gum line. The bacteria in the plaque multiply and invade the gums and the bone, causing inflammation and irritation. This irritation and inflammation of the gum area is known as gingivitis. If the bone of the tooth socket is eaten away by the infection, the tooth eventually becomes loose. It may either fall out or may need to be extracted. Broken teeth and tooth loss are common problems of older cats who have never had good dental hygiene.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Precautionary Measures:

Brush your pet's teeth at home two or three times a week. There are a lot of conventional brushing kits on the market. These kits will generally contain a fingerbrush, a small pet toothbrush, and special pet toothpaste. You should never use human toothpaste on your pet, the pets cannot tolerate the amount of fluoride in it. Since gargling and spitting are something which pets are not very good at, feline/canine toothpaste is specially designed so that you don't need to rinse.

It is your preference whether you choose the fingerbrush or the regular brush. To help your pet get used to the brush, you may want to start by letting your pet sniff or lick it. Then slowly and gently brush the teeth using a small amount of paste and brushing for a very short period of time (a few seconds). Work your way up to brushing your pet's teeth fully.

Once your pet gets comfortable with brushing, you can also start massaging the gums after you brush. This will help stimulate blood flow to the gums and keep the gums healthy. You will also be able to feel for any oddities, broken teeth, or inflamed gums during the massage. If you do see or feel anything out of the ordinary, consult your vet.

Lastly, you can give your pet treats that are specially designed for tartar removal and dental hygiene. You can also use plaque control gels. Such gels are created so that you just need to place a small layer on your pet's teeth and gums once a day.

Symptoms to look for:

- Not eating
- Drooling
- Red, bleeding gums
- Blood in the saliva
- Receding gums
- Bad breath (this can also indicate kidney problems so be sure it is just 'dirty mouth' bad breath)
- Loss of appetite
- Loss of weight
- Yellow/brown/black teeth
- Swollen gums
- Missing or broken teeth

Packerland Veterinary Center is now on Facebook!!

Become a "fan" of PVC on Facebook! Our page includes a photo tour of the clinic, staff photos and biographies, sneak peaks "behind the scenes" as well as periodic discounts and important information only available to our fans!!

