

HERVEY BAY VETERINARY SURGERY

Owner Information Series

THE PROGRESSION OF DENTAL DISEASE

"We really need to see 'Fluffy' for a dental", it's a common request given that 85% of dogs and cats over the age of 4 experience some form of dental disease. So if you have heard a similar comment like this from your vet, you are not alone. With some further explanation and photos to illustrate, we hope to help you understand why your veterinarian is so insistent about teeth and gum care.

The downside of leaving dental problems untreated is your pet's teeth and gums can change rapidly. Advanced dental disease is not only painful and uncomfortable for pets, the procedure to clean and remove teeth becomes more complicated and often more costly to treat. Below is a typical scenario for a dog aged 3 years or older with no professional dental cleaning or homecare (teeth cleaning, dental food, bones, etc.) provided.

First Presentation

Without homecare or any dental treatment it is highly likely for pets to develop a build-up of calculus on the teeth. The rough surface caused by the build-up facilitates plaque accumulation. At this stage you are likely to notice redness and swelling on the gums, commonly known as gingivitis.

Homecare from an early age can prevent both the build-up and plaque accumulation.



Second Presentation (9-12 months later)

If the same pet continues without any home dental care or professional treatment such as a dental scale and polish, plaque will continue to accumulate and some visible gum recession is likely to take place.

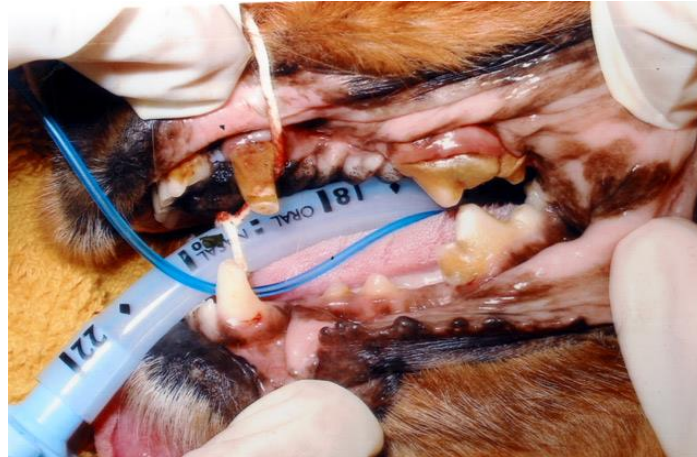


HERVEY BAY VETERINARY SURGERY

Owner Information Series

Third Presentation (Longer term)

Teeth and gum health rapidly declines if left untreated. At these advanced stages you will see heavy calculus accumulation, severe gingivitis and ulceration, missing or moving teeth as well as extreme bad breath. The most concerning change is extreme discomfort and pain. At this point other organ systems in the body can also be affected.



THEY CAN'T TELL US WHEN IT ACHES

We understand it is easy to put off simple procedures like a dental descale and polish until next time. However, it is more difficult for cats and dogs to tell us when they have a toothache. Identifying visible changes and intervening at an early stage will help us to prevent lengthy and sometimes costly procedures and to ensure your pet is as comfortable as possible.

PLEASE CALL US TO SCHEDULE YOUR FREE DENTAL HEALTH CHECK TODAY!