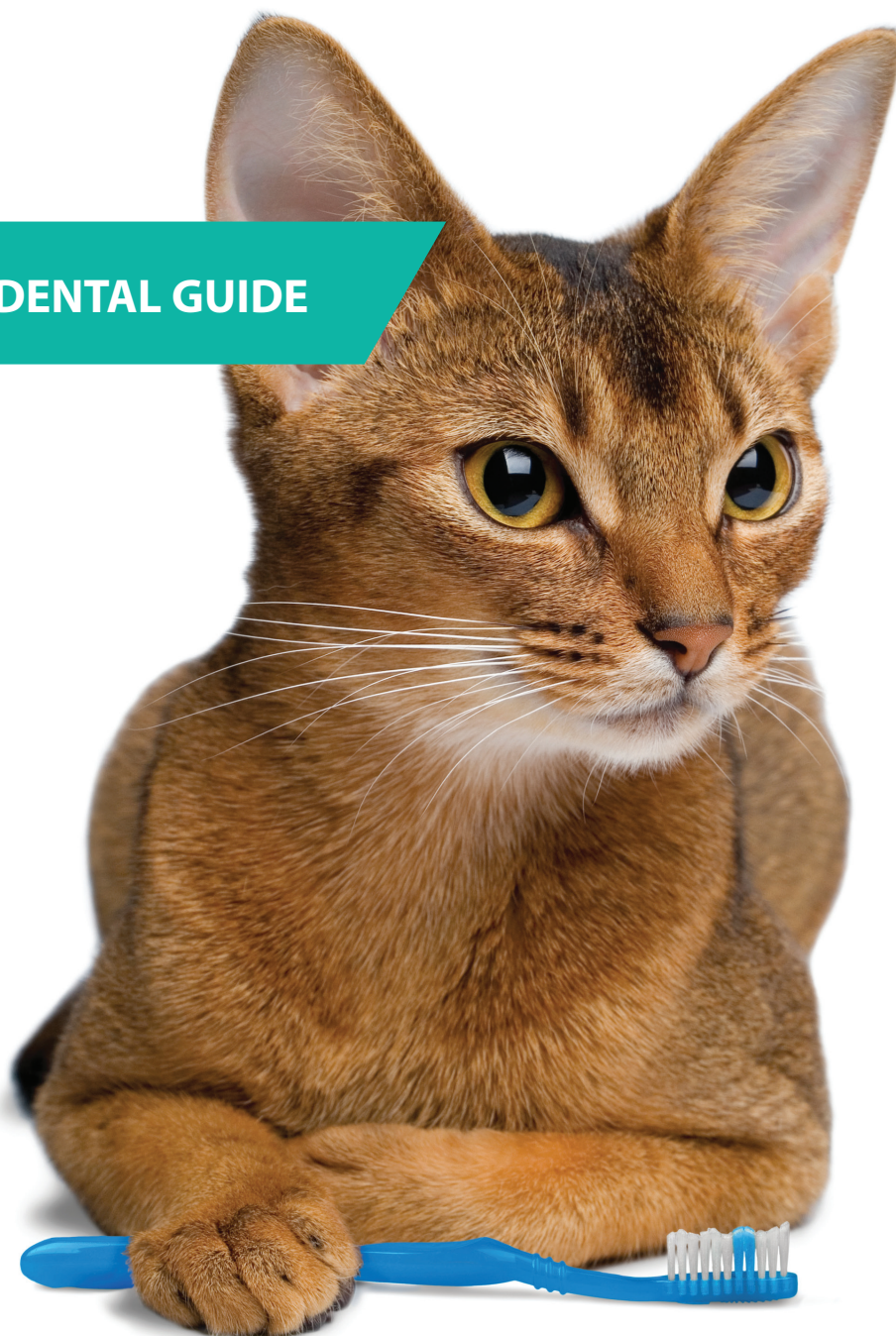




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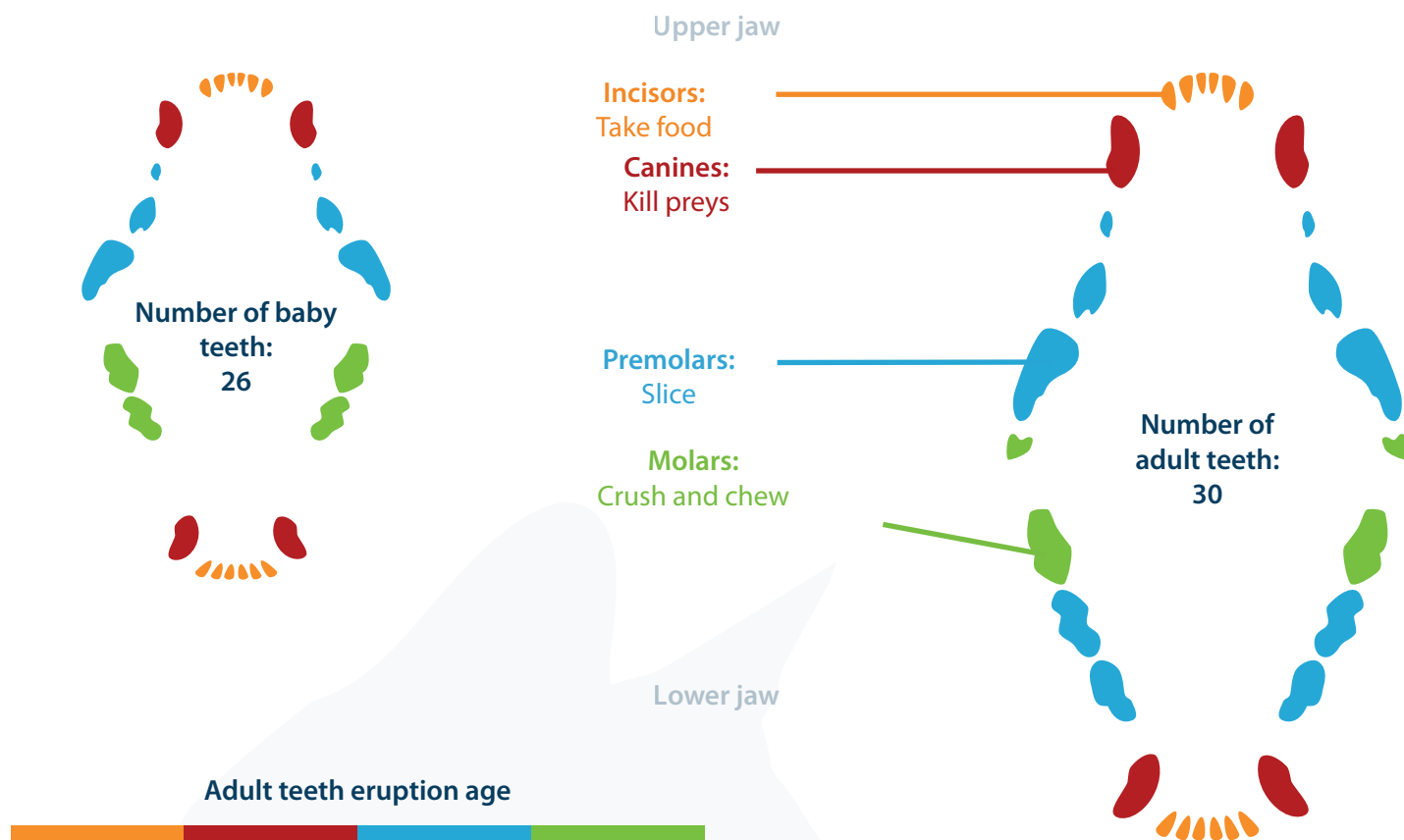
**FELINE DENTAL GUIDE**



# THE ROLE OF TEETH

Like humans, cats have 4 types of teeth, each with a unique function: incisors, canines, premolars and molars.

Also, cats too have baby teeth and adult teeth.

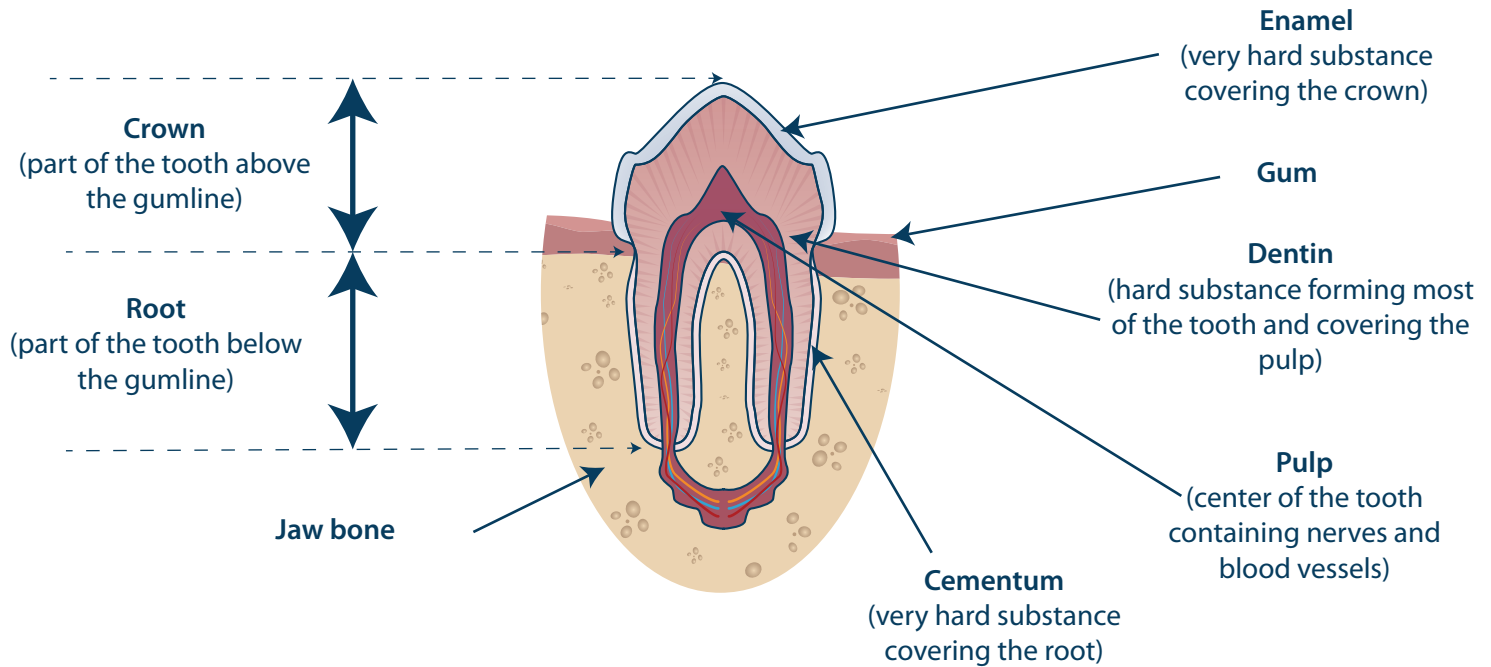


Often, adult teeth come out later than expected. Sometimes, some baby teeth do not even fall out. The cat then has both types of teeth at the same time. Consequently, tartar builds up more easily between the teeth because the space there is minimal.

In general, all baby teeth have fallen before the cat reaches 9 months of age. If there are still baby teeth in place after this age, they must be removed.

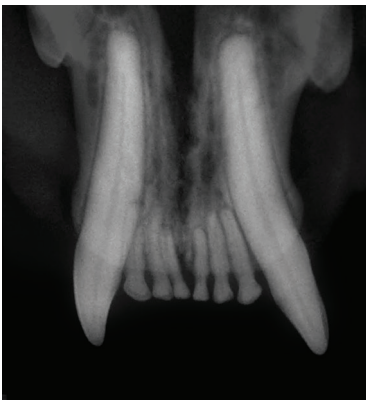


# TEETH ANATOMY



## Anatomy of a tooth with several roots

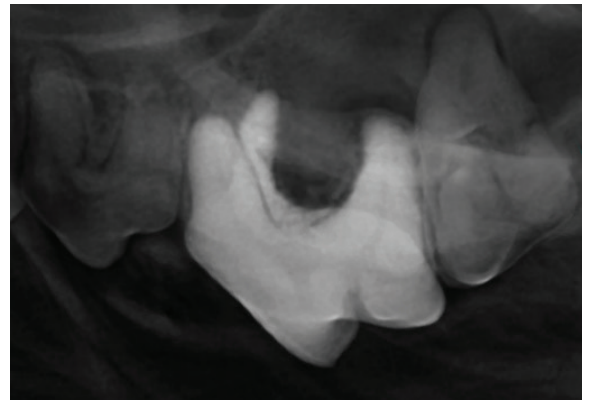
The incisors and canines have only one root while the premolars and molars have two or three roots.



Single root teeth



Two roots tooth



Three roots tooth

# DENTAL DISEASES

## Inflammatory gingivitis and periodontitis:

These two terms refer to inflammation of the gums. With periodontitis, inflammation reaches deep dental tissues and destroys the ties that bind the tooth to the bone.



## Juvenile gingivitis:

- very painful condition sometimes affecting young cats;
- the inflammation appears before adult teeth come out;
- it tends to disappear by itself before the cat is 2 years old;
- regular teeth cleanings are mandatory;
- teeth that disintegrate and those with broken attachments must be removed.

## Ulcerative gingivitis:

- severely inflamed, ulcerated and swollen gums;
- very painful condition that is generally difficult to control;
- removal of affected teeth is often the only way to relieve the animal's pain.



## Stomatitis:

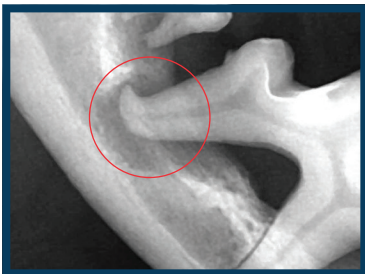
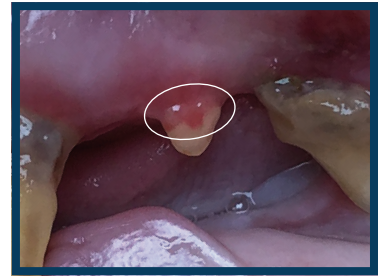
- lesions are more extended than with gingivitis alone. They affect not only the gums, but also the rest of the cat's mouth.



# DENTAL DISEASES

## Dental cavities (resorptive lesions):

- progressive destruction of the hard tissues of the tooth (enamel, cementum and dentin) with formation of a hole;
- pain sensation caused by exposure of the sensitive tissues of the tooth to the environment;
- the gums sometimes fill out the hole;
- such a lesion may be invisible if it is underneath the gumline;
- 20% to 75% of cats have dental cavities;
- their cause is unknown;
- it is impossible to prevent them from appearing;
- the only possible "treatment" is the extraction of the affected teeth.

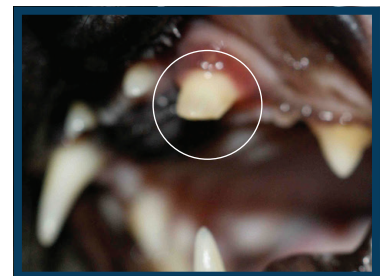


## Tooth abscess:

- "pouch" filled with pus created by infection of tissues around the tooth;
- plaque buildup destroys tissue and allows bacteria to multiply;
- painful lesion sometimes accompanied by swelling of the face;
- the swollen skin can tear and let out pus;
- the tissues behind the eyes may swell too and make them bulge.

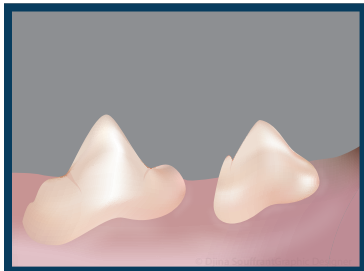
## Dental fracture:

- the fracture may involve the crown and/or the root;
- it may involve only hard tissue (enamel and dentin) or expose the pulp also;
- an exposed pulp caused by a fracture creates an entryway allowing bacteria in the mouth to infect dental tissues. An abscess can then form;
- if the fracture is less than 2 days old, a veterinary dentist can try to save the tooth by doing a root canal. Otherwise, the tooth must be removed and the hole closed to prevent bacteria and food from entering.



# STAGES OF PERIODONTAL DISEASE

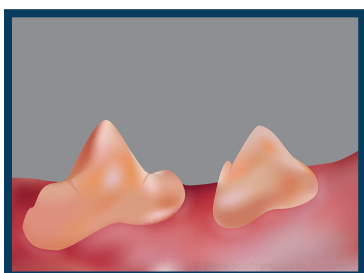
## STAGE 0 | Normal teeth



- Pink and thin gums
- No visible tartar



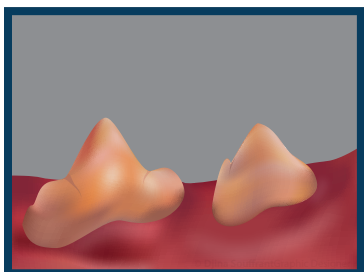
## STAGE 1 | Gingivitis only



- Red and lightly swollen gums
- Tartar visible on the teeth
- Bad breath possible



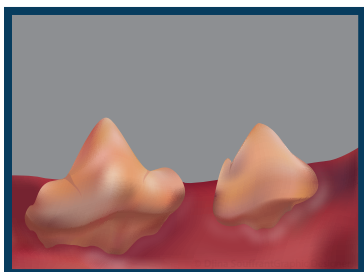
## STAGE 2 | Early periodontitis



- Bad breath more pronounced
- Greater amount of tartar on the teeth
- Gums are a deeper red and more swollen
- Gums are beginning to detach from the teeth



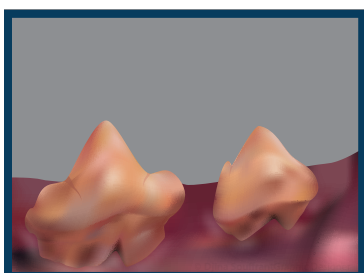
## STAGE 3 | Moderate periodontitis



- Intense bad breath
- Great amount of tartar on the teeth
- Stained or discolored teeth
- Very red and swollen gums
- Dental roots begin to be visible
- Difficulty chewing because of pain



## STAGE 4 | Advanced periodontitis



- Lesions identical to stage 3, but even more severe. Teeth move and there is a lot of pain.



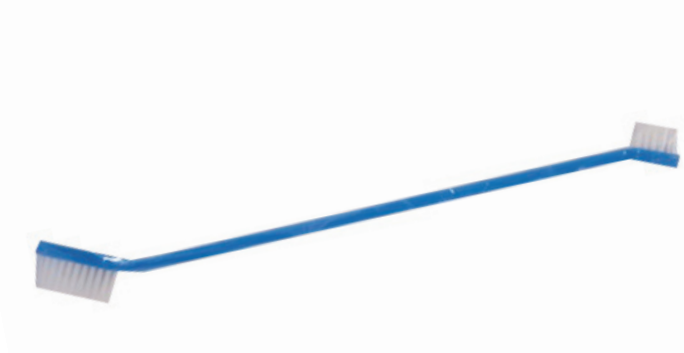


## Dental care

Several means and products are at our disposal to take care of the mouth and teeth of our animals:

- Teeth brushings
- Dental foods
- Dental treats
- Ancillary products
- Regular teeth cleanings

The best way to keep your pet's mouth and teeth healthy for as long as possible is to combine these means.



## Tooth brushing

Brushing removes plaque (white pasty layer) that forms on the teeth **before** it mineralizes and becomes tartar (yellowish hard substance). Once there is tartar, brushing does not remove it.

As this transformation occurs in 36 hours, it is important to brush the teeth every day.

Do not forget the teeth at the back of your animal's mouth!

## DENTAL CARE

### Which toothpaste should you use?

One that is specially designed for animals and that has an enzymatic action that helps soften small tartar particles.

Toothpastes for humans should be avoided because they contain detergents that are irritating to the stomach. Cats can become sick when swallowing them.

### Brushing cats' teeth? Easier said than done!

Most cats resist having their teeth brushed if they are not used to it. To succeed in getting their full cooperation, we have to get them used to the procedure, ideally when they are young.

Better late than never though! It is feasible to brush the teeth of adult cats, but it must be done so gradually.

### How do you get your pet used to having his teeth brushed?

You need to take it one step at a time and make sure that he has fully accepted each one before getting to the next. To achieve that goal, reward him with treats, hugs and kind words each time. You will know that he appreciates the exercise when he lets you do it without resisting. You need to practice often, at least a few times a day, in a quiet place, far away from distractions.

# DENTAL CARE

## Here are the steps to follow



- Gently handle the cat's nose and lips with your fingers.



- Put a little bit of toothpaste on your fingertip and spread it on his teeth and his gums.



- Repeat step 2, but with a toothbrush this time. At the beginning, put just light pressure on the teeth and then, gradually increase it. Increase also the amount of time you spend on each tooth.

## Ancillary products

Ancillary products include:

- Water additives
- Dental gels
- Enzymatic products
- Chewing strips
- Flakes to be sprinkled on food

Water additives and dental gels are antibacterial products. Their main effect is to improve the smell of animals' breath by decreasing the amount of bacteria in their mouths.

Enzymatic products soften tartar, chewing strips remove plaque particles by rubbing on the teeth, and flakes sprinkled on food reduce plaque and tartar buildup, thanks to the purified *Ascophyllum nodosum* seaweed extract they contain.

## Dental foods

More and more, people realize that taking care of their cat's teeth is as important as taking care of their own teeth. Consequently, pet food manufacturers are now producing foods that are supposedly effective for cleaning teeth.

### How can you know if a food is really effective at cleaning pets' teeth?

Look for the VOHC seal! The Veterinary Oral Health Council (VOHC) is an independent organization that tests foods that claim to clean teeth. When the tests demonstrate that the analyzed food reduces gingivitis and/or plaque and/or tartar buildup by at least 20%, the VOHC affixes its seal to the bag.

However, even dental foods have limitations. For example, they do not clean the canine teeth and the incisors because those teeth do not chew food.



## DENTAL CARE

Here are the 3 dental foods that we recommend:

- Hill's® Prescription Diet® t/d®
- Royal Canin® Veterinary Exclusive® Dental®
- Purina® Proplan Veterinary Diet® DH Dental Health®

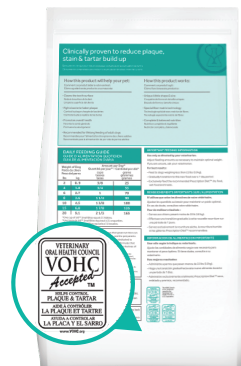
### How does it work?

Like a toothbrush! The kibbles' special texture makes them stay in contact with the teeth surface during chewing. The rubbing produced gently dislodges plaque and tartar. Furthermore, dental kibbles are bigger than regular kibbles and cover the teeth completely, all the way to the gum, for an in depth effect.

Even if the size of kibbles is impressive, do not be afraid to feed them to your pet: he is able to eat them. Do not cut or wet them to make them smaller or softer. To do so would cancel their cleaning effect.

**Did you know that the amount of time that the kibbles stay in contact with the teeth also is important for them to be cleaned adequately?**

If the animal's food portion is divided between a dental diet and an ordinary diet, or if he gets the dental kibbles only as a treat, the food will be less effective because it is going to be in contact with the teeth only for short periods of time. For the food to be as effective as possible, the cat must eat only that.



**Veterinary Oral Health  
Council seal (VOHC)**



## DENTAL CARE

Most cats love dental foods the first time they eat them. However, some cats do not want to try them for several weeks. In that case, you have to be patient and introduce the food gradually.

Here's how to proceed:

- Put a few dental kibbles on a plate next to your animal's bowl of usual food.
- At the end of the day, throw away the remaining dental kibbles because they will have become rancid during the day and will be less appetizing.
- Continue to add new kibbles and replace them every day. Eventually, your pet's curiosity will make him want to taste them.
- Do not forget to wash or change the plate also every day.

**Did you know that wet food does not cause more plaque and tartar buildup than ordinary dry food?**

Plaque buildup does not depend at all on the amount of water in the food. Plaque forms rather following a reaction between:

- the animal's saliva;
- the bacteria in his mouth;
- the constituents of the food.

Ordinary kibbles help dislodge pieces of food stuck between the teeth, but they do not remove plaque, the real cause of dental disease. Therefore, eating ordinary dry food is not enough to keep the cats' mouths and teeth healthy.



### Treats

As with food, many treats bear the VOHC seal and are effective in reducing plaque and tartar buildup. However, they should be offered only in small quantities to supplement the basic diet of pets. They should not be solely relied upon to clean their mouths and teeth. Instead, they should be made a part of a complete dental health program.



# TEETH CLEANING

## Teeth cleaning

Like humans, cats need to go to the "dentist" regularly to get their teeth cleaned and their mouths examined.

This procedure is important for many reasons:

- It can be difficult to clean all the teeth adequately, specially those at the back of the mouth.
- Dental care done at home does not completely remove plaque and tartar underneath the gumline. As a result, bacteria trapped there multiply, and cause infection and periodontal disease.
- Bacteria enter the animal's bloodstream and spread throughout his body.
- In humans, it is proven that bad dental health shortens life expectancy. Also, people affected are at increased risk of aborting, and getting heart and kidney diseases. It is the same with animals.

To prevent permanent damages, it is important to clean the teeth before periodontal disease appears. This prevents the animal from feeling pain, from losing his teeth and from becoming weak because of pain and infection, all of which increase the risk of anesthetic complications.

Naturally, it is necessary to continue taking care of the teeth at home after the teeth cleaning, otherwise tartar will build up again very quickly.



## Anesthetic safety

Many options are available to us to make the anesthesia as safe as possible for the pet during his teeth cleaning. Indeed, we can:

- **do a physical exam before anesthetizing him.** To detect physical signs of disease.
- **do a blood test.** To verify that his organs are able to eliminate the anesthetic drugs from his system. This test also sometimes reveals diseases that are "invisible" from the exterior and that can increase the risk of the anesthesia.
- **give IV fluids.** To help keep his blood pressure normal and to remove the drugs from his bloodstream faster.

If abnormalities are found on the blood test and/or physical exam, we might want to postpone the procedure to after having identified and corrected the cause. Some additional tests might be recommended also.



# TEETH CLEANING

## Teeth cleaning steps



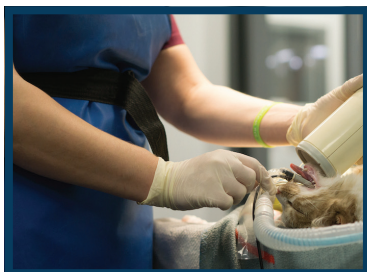
### STEP 1 | Ultrasonic teeth cleaning

Under the supervision of a veterinarian, an animal health technician removes tartar and plaque between the teeth, and above and below the gumline.



### STEP 2 | Polishing

Polishing is a crucial step in teeth cleaning. It smooths out the grooves that the instruments created on the teeth. If polishing is not done, plaque will attach more easily to the teeth afterwards.



### STEP 3 | Dental X-rays

X-rays are essential for evaluating the part of the teeth and dental tissues located underneath the gumline. X-rays can identify, for instance:

- dental abscesses;
- infection in the jawbone;
- teeth trapped under the gumline;
- dental roots damaged or merged with the bone.



### STEP 4 | Dental exam

The veterinarian examines the animal's mouth and teeth, and interprets dental X-rays to determine if extractions are necessary or not.



### STEP 5 | Extractions

The veterinarian may need to extract teeth for various reasons. Once the teeth are removed, the holes in the gum must be closed with stitches to prevent food and bacteria from entering them. Otherwise, infection can develop locally and then spread throughout the animal's body.



## TEETH CLEANING

### After the teeth cleaning

Anyone who has ever had cavities or gingivitis knows that these conditions can be painful. It's the same thing for cats. Even if they do not have the ability to speak to tell us that they are in pain, they often show it to us in other ways: they can sleep more, eat less, be grumpier, and so on. Unfortunately, sometimes these signs go unnoticed or are attributed to causes other than pain. As a result, the animal endures it for months or even years.

People are often reluctant to have their cat's teeth cleaned. Either because they fear anesthesia or because they are not convinced that their animal really hurts. It is usually when they notice his energy boost and apparent "rejuvenation", even after many teeth have been removed, that people understand that they have done the right thing.



# HEALTH BOOKLET

**Patient's name:** \_\_\_\_\_

File #: \_\_\_\_\_

Patient #: \_\_\_\_\_

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**A** Absent  
**E** Extracted  
**F** Fractured  
**G** Gingivitis  
**M** Mobile  
**P** Tooth pocket  
**R** Resorption

## HEALTH BOOKLET

If we have extracted teeth from your cat's mouth, please feed him only canned food for 2 weeks. Before giving him dry food and treats, and before starting dental care at home, have his mouth checked by his veterinarian. Suture lines will melt over time: they do not need to be removed.

### Care after a teeth cleaning:

- ☐ **Metacam®** (*anti-inflammatory*): \_\_\_\_\_  
every 24 hours for \_\_\_\_\_ days.
- ☐ **Buprenorphine** (*painkiller*): \_\_\_\_\_ on the gums  
(or underneath the tongue) \_\_\_\_\_ times per  
day for \_\_\_\_\_ days.
- ☐ **Prednisolone** (*anti-inflammatory*):  
\_\_\_\_\_ times per day for \_\_\_\_\_ days  
and \_\_\_\_\_ times per day for \_\_\_\_\_  
days and \_\_\_\_\_ times per day  
for \_\_\_\_\_ days.
- ☐ **Doxycycline** (*antibiotic*): \_\_\_\_\_ 1 or 2  
times per day for \_\_\_\_\_ days.
- ☐ **Clinacin®** (*antibiotic*): \_\_\_\_\_ times per  
day for \_\_\_\_\_ days.
- ☐ **Metronidazole** (*antibiotic*): \_\_\_\_\_  
times per day for \_\_\_\_\_.
- ☐ **Food**: type \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ can(s)/day for  
\_\_\_\_\_ days.

### Oral hygiene:

#### Teeth brushing:

Virbac Dentifrice C.E.T.™ ☐ Dechra Vetrudent™ ☐

#### Wipes:

Dechra Dentacetic™ ☐ Dechra Vetrudent™ ☐

#### Ancillary products:

ProConcept DentaChlor™ ☐ Max-Guard Gel™ ☐

Dechra Vetrudent™ ☐ Dechra Dentacetic™ ☐

#### Treats:

Virbac Lamelles C.E.T.™ ☐

#### Dental food:

T/D Hill's<sup>MD</sup> ☐ Dentaire RC<sup>MD</sup> ☐ DH PVD<sup>MD</sup> ☐

#### Food recommendations:

Name of the diet: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of cups per day: \_\_\_\_\_

Other comments: \_\_\_\_\_

### Recommendations:

Please make an appointment with one of our veterinarians in \_\_\_\_\_ days to make sure that your animal's dental wounds have healed completely.

We also recommend that you come back in \_\_\_\_\_ months to have his mouth and teeth checked.



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*Working together for animal health and wellbeing.*



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