

THE ULTIMATE DENTAL HEALTH GUIDE FOR DOGS



TRUDOG®

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Did you know....

The #1 sign of gum disease in dogs is bad breath?

According the American Animal Health Association, a stinky mouth is one of the very first signs of periodontal disease in dogs.

Why Does Periodontal Disease Matter to My Dog?

Don't all dogs just have bad breath?

No! Contrary to popular belief, it is not normal for dogs to have stinky puppy breath. That foul odor is caused by bacteria in the dog's mouth- bacteria that breeds and thrives in the moist, warm environment of your dog's body. Bacterial infections often lead to pain, tooth loss, and serious medical conditions for dogs if left untreated.

Just like in humans, the health of your dog's mouth is vital to the health of his entire body.



Periodontal disease can lead to:

- Heart disease/ heart failure
- Kidney disease/ kidney failure
- Paralysis
- Dental pain
- Tooth loss
- Dental abscesses
- Liver disease/ liver failure
- Septic infections
- Inflammation
- Autoimmune disorders
- Premature death

Gum disease is so much more than just stinky breath!

What is Gum Disease in Dogs

Gum disease in dogs occurs when bacteria in the mouth thrive and attack the gums. This results in shrinking of the gum that exposes the root of the tooth. Root exposure is very painful for your fur baby and a dog will often display this pain with a decreased appetite, grouchy attitude, and by withdrawing to a quiet place where he can be alone. He may lick obsessively at a paw or hindquarter, or whimper and growl when anyone attempts to examine his mouth.

Bacteria also lead to dental cavities which require tooth extraction and often creates long-term dental pain in dogs as well as eating problems. If you've ever had a cavity or a tooth pulled, you can relate.



What Causes Gum Disease in Dogs?

Gum disease is so common in our dogs mainly because of the diet we feed them. All those carbohydrates, sugars, starches, and additives create a sticky paste in your dog's mouth that clings to the teeth and provides an ideal environment for the bacteria that cause gum disease. Tartar and plaque buildup further complicates the problem and contribute to a favorable environment for bad bacteria.

Plus, not many pet parents are diligent about making regular oral hygiene a priority. They often cite a dog's resistance to mouth care as the primary reason to skip brushing.

But dental hygiene is critical for your dog's good health. Bacterial overgrowth is known to travel to other parts of the body beyond the mouth, resulting in serious medical conditions, infections, and even death.

Plus, that bacterial overgrowth can adversely affect your dog's natural ability to digest his food properly because of enzyme imbalances in the stomach, tooth pain, tooth loss, and other illness that occur as a direct result of gum disease. Your dog may lose weight, have difficulty eating, or become a flatulence machine that no one wants to sit near when his digestion is impaired. (To help correct enzyme balances in your dog's digestive system, try [PROTECT ME probiotics for dogs](#).)



How to Treat Gum Disease

Often, dogs with gum disease visit the veterinarian and are recommended a course of antibiotics (like Clindamycin) and a dental cleaning and/or tooth extraction.

This can be problematic for several reasons:

Antibiotics are not tolerated well by many dogs and can create a storm of yeast overgrowth and digestive enzyme imbalances that result in diarrhea, poor digestion, chronic flatulence, indigestion, loss of appetite, and poor nutrient absorption.

1

The cost of dental procedures can be very expensive for pet parents.

3

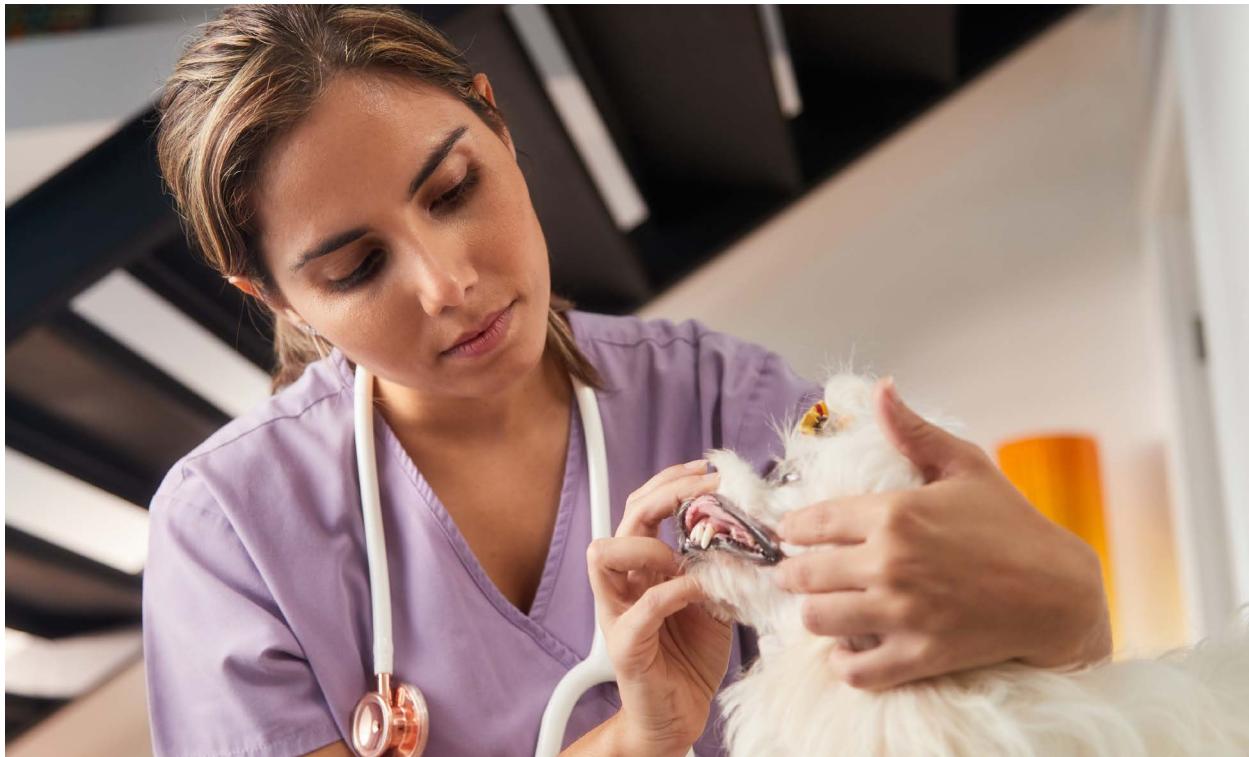
Damage from advanced gum disease cannot be “cured”. You can only treat the symptoms and prevent future infection. The damage caused by gum disease is permanent.

4

Dental cleanings and procedures require a dog to be put under anesthesia, which can be problematic for some dogs due to common complications related to their breed. Dog breeds that are particularly prone to anesthesia-related problems are: pugs, bulldogs, boxers, Boston terriers, greyhound, whippet, Italian greyhound, borzoi, Irish wolfhound, saluki, border collie, collie, Australian shepherd, sheltie, Newfoundland, great pyrenees, doberman, and all toy breed dogs. And of course, senior dogs have special risks when undergoing anesthesia as well.

2

For these reasons, prevention truly is the best course of action.



How to Prevent Gum Disease in Dogs

Prevention can start at any age. Even though the damage from gum disease is permanent, treatment can limit and prevent further damage.

Ideally, it's best to start with dental hygiene the day your puppy starts eating solid food. Starting a grooming routine early on will help your puppy learn that hygiene is a good thing and will limit the resistance you experience later on. But even adult and senior dogs can be trained to tolerate dental care if you help them create positive associations with the act of dental care. Lots of healthy treats, praise, and a positive attitude on your part will go a long way toward helping your dog learn to love his **doggie dental care** (or at least not hate it).

There are many doggie dental care products on the market from tooth wipes to sprays

and toothpastes. Just be sure you research how to care for your dog's teeth and don't use "people" products on your dog. Like a toddler, he will swallow the toothpaste if used. Using products designed specifically for dogs is usually best.

You can opt for self-serve products like **Orapup's Orabrush** for pets. Simply squeeze a little flavored gel onto the brush and let your dog lick it clean. The ingredients in the gel help fight plaque and the brush cleans your dog's tongue as he licks.

More Doggie Dental Care Options

Dental sprays, like **SPRAY ME**, are very popular (especially for cats and skittish dogs) because they are quick and easy to use. Just a couple of sprays to the gum line and you're done. Just be sure to take away your dog's water for 30 minutes afterward to allow the essential oils to soften the tartar on your dog's teeth and kill off bacteria in his mouth.

You can also use a dental gel that allows you to rub the product on your dog's gums, or use a washcloth to gently scrub his teeth and gums to help remove more buildup faster. **GEL ME** contains the same essential oils as **SPRAY ME**, just in a convenient gel form.

Preventing gum disease starts with changing your dog's diet. Dogs are not naturally inclined to eat grains, starches, and sugary foods. Yet these ingredients make up the majority of our dogs' diets today. A dog's body is designed to eat meat, bones, and organ meats of prey animals. They "can" eat other food to survive when prey is scarce, but it's not their primary source of nutrition in nature. Try switching your dog to a **raw meat-based diet like FEED ME** for optimal nutrition without the grains and fillers.

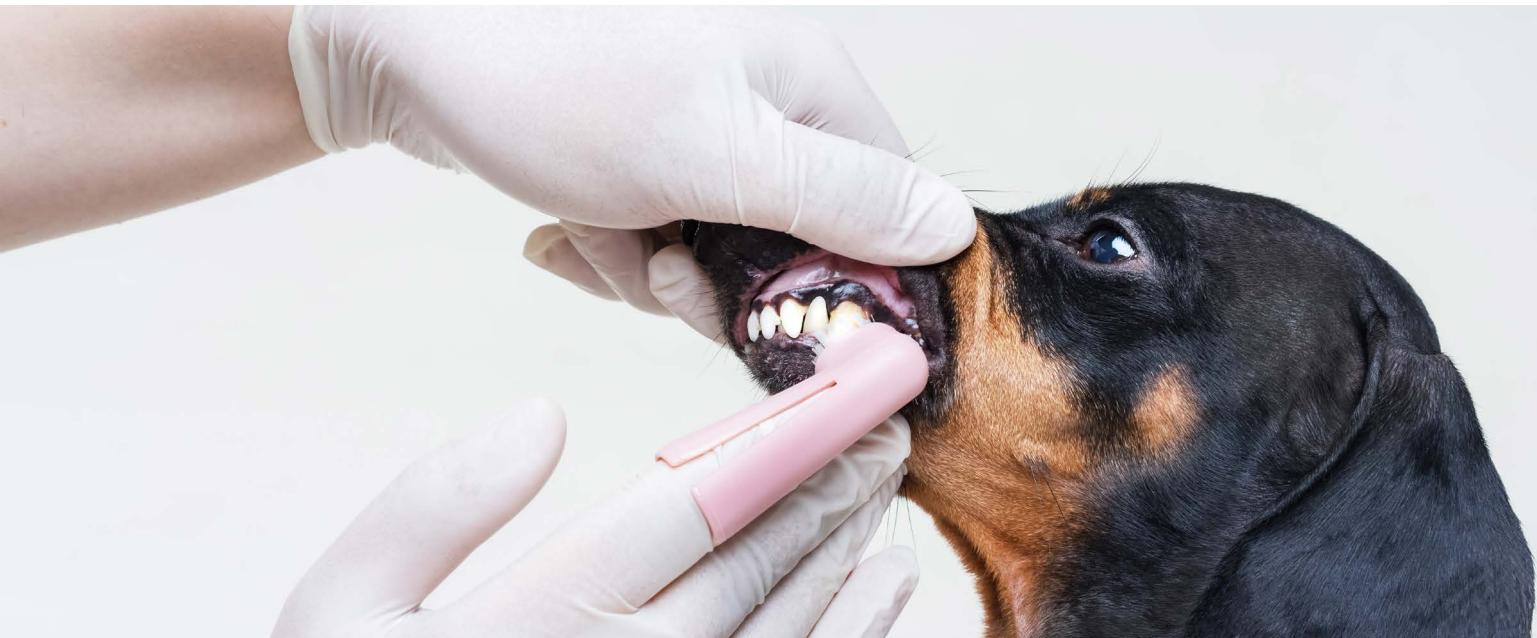
The act of eating meat, with natural striations to naturally brush teeth, and crunching on bones to get to the marrow scrapes any residual tartar off a dog's teeth in the wild. Domestic dogs, however, need a little help in this department.

1

Limit his consumption of grains, starches, and sugars by feeding him a **meat-based raw diet for dogs**

2

Help him out with his dental hygiene by gently rubbing his teeth with a washcloth and using a dental product designed for dogs, like **GEL ME** dental gel for pets.



How Brushing Your Dog's Teeth Can Save You Money

The thought of brushing your dog's teeth like you would a human's might seem odd, but it can actually be incredibly beneficial to your dog's health and actually save you money in the long run.

Dr. Mark Reeve was featured on [ABC Radio Adelaide's](#) afternoon program and talked about why all dog parents should make their fur baby's at-home dental care a priority.

Brush, Brush, Brush!

Dog breath is normal and often overlooked, but if you have to hold your own breath when you get a whiff of your dog's breath, then you've got a bad case of halitosis on your hands, which, according to Reeve, is "the first sign of disease in the mouth."

Oral infections, disease, tooth decay and other dental concerns for dogs are more common than people realize, and many people will just let them happen because they assume it's normal and just a part of aging, etc. But the truth is that your dog's dental health can actually have a major impact on his overall health and can lead to you having to pay mounds of vet bills later on in order to get his health back on track.

However, if you start taking the proper steps now to keep your fur baby's dental health in good shape, then a lot of the risk for dental disease and infection can be significantly decreased.



Bones Don't Actually Work

A common go-to people will use is throwing their dog a bone, with the intent to maintain their dog's dental health. While this can help keep their teeth sharp and strong, bones don't actually do the full cleaning job. In fact, Reeve strongly advises against frequently giving your dog hard bones and biscuits to help their teeth because it increases the chances of them getting sharp fragments stuck in their teeth or their teeth breaking or chipping, which can ultimately lead to injury or infection.

"Brushing your dog's teeth is actually the best thing to look after their teeth – just like our teeth," he said.

How Do You Brush Your Dog's Teeth?

Interestingly enough, Reeve says that you don't actually need a toothbrush and toothpaste to effectively clean your dog's teeth, though this is definitely an option. If you do prefer to do a full brushing job, it's advised that you start by treating the toothbrush like a game to get your pup used to it, then add the toothpaste later on. It's best to brush their teeth 2-3 times a week, or daily for best results.

However, if you don't feel you need to do the thorough brushing, Reeve says you can simply examine your fur baby's teeth after every meal and carefully remove any leftover food that may be stuck in their mouth and teeth. He says you can use a basic face cleaner to do a more thorough job if needed.

If you can, it's best to start practicing oral care on your fur baby when he's young to help him get used to it from the start. This will make it a much easier and smoother process for you as he gets older. Frequently handling their mouths can also help them get used to being touched and reduce the chances of them developing any sensitivities when their mouths are touched by other dogs or people.



Other Dental Care Products

To further help ensure your dog's dental health, you can also look into investing in our very own dental care products that can do wonders for your dog's teeth:

- **Spray Me** is an easy spray for your dog's mouth and teeth that can help control plaque and tarter, kill off any foreign bacteria, aid in the prevention of gum disease, and also freshen breath.
- **Gel Me** is a safe, alcohol-free gel formula that can also help prevent plaque and tarter buildup, kill off foreign bacteria, prevent disease and keep their breath fresh.
- Clean Me are dental chews (sized for either **large dogs** or **small dogs**) that freshen breath, clear away tarter, promote oral health and are easy and yummy for your fur baby to consume.
- **Beef & Bacon Lickies** is yummy-tasting enzyme formulated gel that's filled with vitamins and helps fight bad breath, remove harmful bacteria, soften and remove plaque, and keep the tongue clean.



Conclusion

Just like for you or your family, dental care is extremely important for your growing or aging furry friend. Have you ever brushed your dog's teeth before? Were you aware of how important it was? Do you have any additional questions that we can help answer? Let us know, we would love to support you and your fur baby however we can.

Why Should I Brush My Dog's Teeth?

We've all been taught about the importance of dental hygiene from a very young age. We brush, floss, use mouthwash, and attend the dentist regularly. And yet, even the most dentally conscientious people forget that humans aren't the only ones who need this type of care.

It turns out that 80% of all dogs have some type of dental disease by the time they reach 3 years of age. That's a lot of unhealthy doggie teeth!

The good news is that the majority of your dog's dental issues can be avoided by taking just a little extra care when it comes to their teeth.

How Dental Disease Starts

The main culprit for dental disease is bacteria. Over time bacteria builds up in the mouth and forms a plaque which then hardens into tartar and sticks to the teeth. However, the real issue begins when this tartar spreads underneath the gum line. At this point the plaque and tartar can lead to tissue damage and eventual tooth loss.

The dog's immune system does everything it can to fight the bacteria and tartar build up, but in the process can end up damaging the tissues even further. If the case becomes severe, and the dental issues are not addressed correctly, this immune response can actually make the situation worse, rather than better!

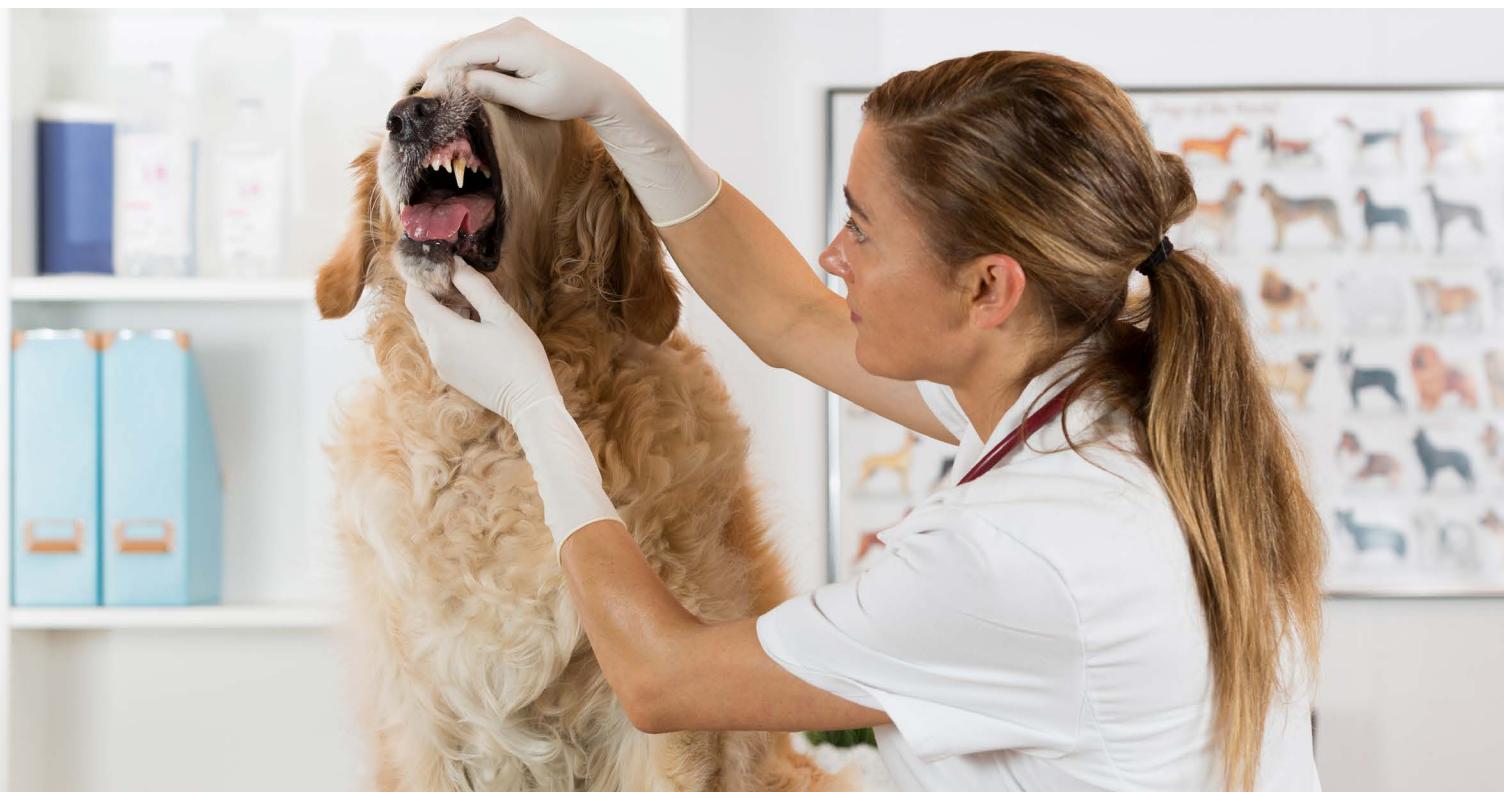
Symptoms Of Dental Disease

If your dog is showing any of the following signs, it's likely that he has a dental disease.

- Visible plaque or tartar
- Bad breath or mouth odor
- Chewing with the head tilted to one side
- Food dropping from the mouth during meals
- Loose teeth or loss of teeth
- Unwilling to eat
- Crying out in pain
- Shying from your touch
- Unwilling to chew hard objects

What Can I Do To Help?

There are many contributing and possible causes for dental disease including genetics, inflammation, medications, infections, lack of dental care, and diet. Although as a dog owner you may not be able to influence all of these factors, there are many things that you can do to lower your dog's risk for disease.



A Good Diet

A dog's diet is a huge factor when it comes to dental health.

You may have heard the theory that dry dog food helps clean a dog's teeth. Unfortunately, this is entirely false. Dry dog food is mainly made up of carbohydrates, which breaks down into sugars when consumed. These sugars than stick to your pup's teeth and there you have it! Dental disease.

But as long as you make sure to brush away the plaque then it's fine right? Well, not exactly.

Removing the plaque regularly does help, but it doesn't address the cause. The high levels of carbohydrates and sugar in dry dog foods makes it easier for bacteria to build at a quicker pace. Additionally, dry dog foods are generally poor in nutrients which means your dog's immune system isn't getting the support it needs either.

So if your everyday kibble isn't ideal, what should your dog be eating? [Raw dog food!](#)

Raw dog foods contain natural enzymes that can actually help protect the teeth and gums, and give your dog the immune support they need to fight disease.

Of course, not all raw dog foods are created equal. Make sure the [raw dog food](#) you choose doesn't have unnatural starches or sugars that promote bacterial growth, or artificial and synthetic ingredients that put stress on a dog's immune system.

[TruDog foods](#) meat all of this criteria and more! Check out our awesome selection.



Teeth Brushing

I bet you didn't see that one coming!

Just like regular grooming and exercise, your dog needs daily dental care. If brushing every day really isn't an option, aim for 3 or 4 times a week at the least. Bacteria can build up pretty fast, and keeping it under control with a daily brushing is better than having to treat a severe infection or disease!

It is best to introduce dental care when your dog is still a puppy, but it's never too late to start giving your adult dog's teeth some attention. Just be sure to take it slowly and patiently as both you and your dog may need to warm up to the process. Lots of love and treats can go a long way!

Before you jump right into your dog's mouth, however, make sure you have the correct supplies.

A doggie toothbrush.

Canine toothbrushes are angled in such a way that can make tooth brushing a lot easier. Others are made to slip over your finger which is a great option as well. Human tooth brushes also work well as long as they are soft and match your dog's mouth size.

Toothpaste.

Unless you have somehow trained your dog to spit you'll need a toothpaste that's safe to swallow. For this reason it's very important that you don't use a human formula, which shouldn't be ingested. Your dog will probably prefer the meat-flavored toothpaste options anyway!

Other Supplies.

Although the brush and paste are most important, there are [many other options](#) for additional dental care. Check out the [TruDog site](#) for [many of these supplies](#) such as dental rinses, dental sprays, dental drops, water additives, dental pads or wipes, and dental chews.

Let The Brushing Begin!

Here are some simple steps for how to successfully clean those pearly whites.

1. Before beginning, let your dog sniff and lick the toothpaste and toothbrush. This is especially important if you're using a new product or if you haven't brushed in a while. Let your dog become comfortable with your supplies before sticking them in his mouth.
2. Move your dog's lips aside and rub the visible teeth with the toothbrush and paste. Circular motions are best. Don't forget to brush along the gum line! Once your dog is comfortable with you brushing the visible teeth, try gently opening his jaw to brush the back teeth as well.
3. Finish by rewarding him with praise, affection, or a treat. This step is very important, even if the process didn't go well. You want to make sure that your dog has positive feelings associated with teeth brushing so the process will run smoothly the next time.

Professional Examinations And Cleaning

Just like humans, even after the best natural and at-home care, some dogs may require a professional examination or cleaning. Although putting your dog under anesthesia may seem scary, it is the best way to get the thorough, deep cleaning that your dog may need.

You can assure that your dog is getting the care best suited for his needs by making sure your dog gets the proper pre-anesthesia testing, that the person performing the procedure has the correct training or certification, and that your dog will be safely monitored throughout the entire process.



Conclusion

Dental care and tooth brushing may seem like an activity meant just for humans, but your dog needs the extra care just as much as you do! Collecting the right kind of supplies, selecting a healthy diet, and finding a daily dental routine tailored to your dog are all great ways of ensuring that your pooch's teeth are clean and healthy so you can prevent risk for dental disease!

The Top Five Teeth & Oral Problems In Dogs

Your fur baby's oral health is of utmost importance. Dental concerns plague many dogs in the world, and some pet parents don't realize that their dog is suffering. Teeth and gum problems can cause great discomfort for your dog, but it is unlikely they will tell you so unless it gets really bad. Dogs are wired that way, you see. Showing weakness puts them in danger in the wild, so they are biologically wired to act as if everything is okay.



What Are Common Teeth Problems In Dogs?

Today we are going to talk about the 5 most common teeth and gum issues in canines, as well as how to spot them and how to treat them.

#1 Retained Baby Teeth

Dogs lose their baby teeth just like people do. For puppies, this happens between 4 and 6 months of age. You might notice your pup's baby teeth lying around the house during this stage of his or her life. This process usually happens without intervention, but for some dogs, the baby teeth don't quite fall out and remain in the mouth while the adult teeth are coming in. This can cause the adult tooth to come in crooked, trigger inflammation in the mouth and/or create some pain for your puppy. If you notice a baby tooth and adult tooth fighting for space in your puppy's mouth, give your vet a call and see if they think it needs to be extracted.

#2 Malocclusion

This is a genetic condition that causes misalignment of the upper and lower jaw. For some this is minor and will not cause problems, but occasionally this condition can cause pain when chewing or lead to periodontal disease. Veterinarians will not do a procedure solely for aesthetic purposes, but they may decide to extract a tooth or do a minor surgery if your dog is in pain.

#3 Periodontal Disease

This is the most commonly diagnosed oral disease in dogs. Symptoms include bloody gums, excessive tartar and plaque buildup and eventually loosen and/or falling out teeth. It develops slowly over time due to poor oral hygiene and diet. If left untreated, the infection can travel to other organs in the body. The best way to prevent periodontal disease is through at-home [tooth brushing](#) or [dental spray](#), [healthy food](#) (raw), and periodic dental exams by your vet.



#4 Broken or Cracked Teeth

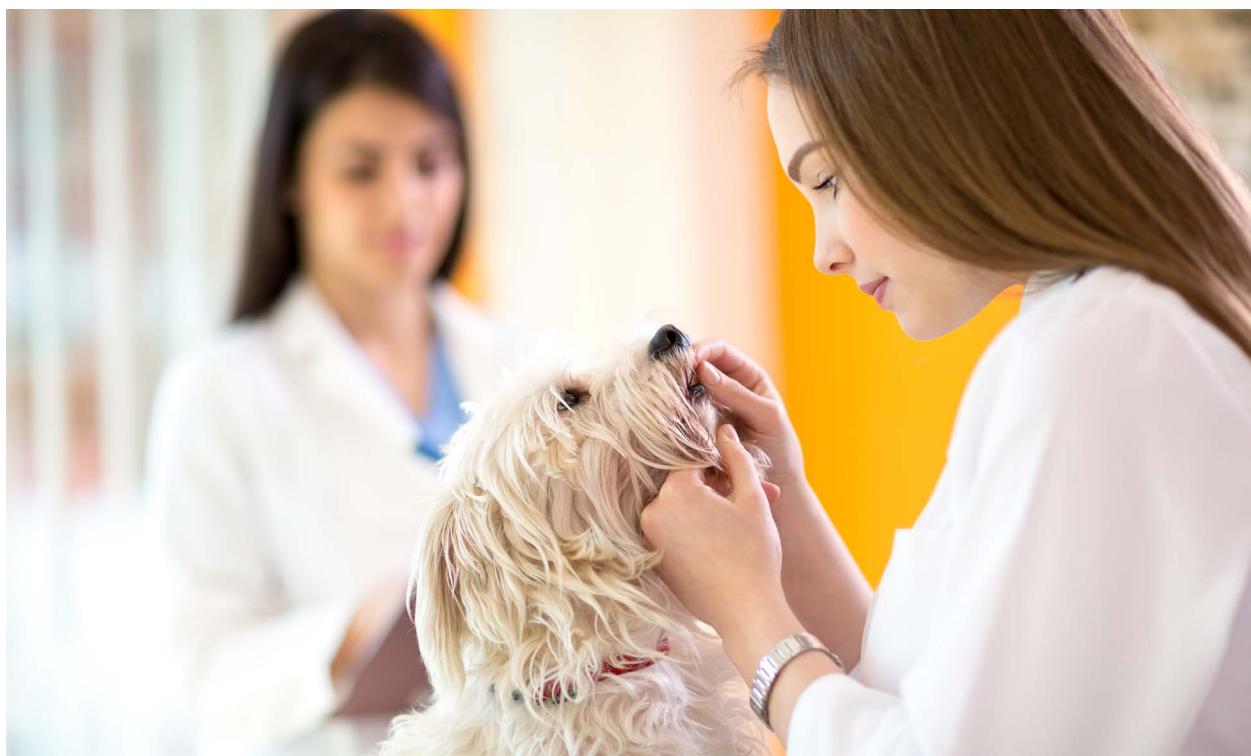
Some dogs get a little too intense with chewing and crack off a piece of their tooth. This exposes the nerve, which can be quite painful. The chipped tooth can also become infected or result in a root abscess. If you notice a chipped or cracked tooth in your dog's mouth or they seem to be struggling with eating/drinking, talk to your vet. Whether or not the recommend repairing the tooth will depend on the extent of the damage.

#5 Root Abscess

The most painful and common oral problem dogs face are tooth root abscesses. This can happen due to untreated periodontal disease or a cracked tooth that exposes the root. Bacteria travels down into the root and creates an infection which causes inflammation, swelling, and a painful abscess. Symptoms include trouble eating, facial swelling, eye inflammation (if the infected tooth is close to the eyes), and a look of discomfort. It is important to see your veterinarian quickly if you suspect your dog has a tooth root abscess as these are very painful and can lead to deeper problems. Your vet will most likely recommend an antibiotic, pain medication and possibly extract the infected tooth.

Conclusion

Preventing oral health problems is the best way to go! Follow a good [oral hygiene](#) routine with your dog. Canines generally experience fewer dental problems in their life than us humans, but keeping their teeth and gums in good shape is important nonetheless. Avoid unnecessary veterinary bills and heartache by taking care of your dog's teeth now.



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