



# Dental Disease



This Brochure  
courtesy of

**Hollyoak**  
Veterinary Surgery

IMPINGTON

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## What is dental disease?

**A**s with people, pets need to keep healthy teeth and gums throughout their life. Research shows that at around the age of two, 80% of dogs and 70% of cats have some sign of dental disease. Such oral health problems often begin with a build-up of plaque, a sticky film that is continually forming on the teeth. Plaque can harden and form unsightly tartar if left untreated. Plaque and tartar can lead to gingivitis, a painful condition of inflamed gums, and eventually, periodontal disease may develop. In severe cases damage is so bad that tooth loss can occur. Infection associated with dental disease is responsible for bad breath and bacteria can enter a pet's blood stream and spread to the vital organs such as heart, liver or kidneys.

### **Factors that can contribute to a pet developing dental problems include:**

#### **POOR ORAL HYGIENE**

Without proper preventative care, plaque and tartar can accumulate and lead to gingivitis and periodontal disease.

#### **BREED**

Overcrowded or misaligned teeth are more often a problem for smaller breeds of dogs and can encourage periodontal disease. Certain cat breeds (eg Abyssinian and Somali) may be more disposed to periodontal disease.

#### **FOOD**

Feeding your pet on sticky food can lead to a more rapid accumulation of plaque.

#### **AGE**

Dental disease occurs more commonly as pets get older.

## Recognising the signs of dental disease

**A**lways ask your vet about the condition of your pet's teeth. However, there are a variety of indications that your pet may have dental problems.

### Signs of dental disease:

- Bad breath
- Build up of yellow brown tartar
- Reddened or bleeding gums
- Pain when eating or pawing at the mouth
- Change of chewing or eating habits
- Subdued behaviour
- Dribbling saliva
- Tooth loss



Feline periodontal disease



Feline healthy mouth

### IMPORTANT

Even if your pet does not show any of these signs, it is worth asking your vet for a regular dental check-up. Some problems may not be immediately obvious and pets can be particularly prone to dental disease in later life.

## Diagnosis

A professional examination and assessment is the best way to determine if your pet has dental disease. Your vet will check for signs of tooth and gum damage and decide what treatment is required for your pet.

In severe cases, your vet may advise extraction of loose or damaged teeth. But unless there are specific problems, your vet will be likely to recommend a scaling and polishing of your pet's teeth to remove plaque, tartar and staining. For this procedure to be as effective and safe as possible, your pet will usually be given a general anaesthetic.

Following initial treatment, good oral health can be maintained with regular cleaning. Your vet can advise on preventative measures such as tooth brushing and special foods. When brushing is recommended, a specially designed pet toothpaste and toothbrush should be used; ask your vet about the correct brushing technique.



# Management and control of pets with dental disease

Hill's™ Prescription Diet™ Canine t/d™ and Prescription Diet™ Feline t/d™ are formulated to assist in the care of your pet's teeth and are clinically proven to be very effective. They differ from other dry pet foods in that the kibbles are larger and do not shatter immediately when bitten into. Instead, the tooth penetrates the kibble and deposits of plaque and other debris are wiped from the surface, helping to prevent problems such as bad breath and tooth loss. Hill's has added a superior antioxidant formula to combat oxidative damage which plays a significant role in the progression of dental disease



Canine t/d™ and Feline t/d™ are complete and balanced foods that can be fed daily without the need for other supplements.



This product provides dental benefits that are recognised by the Veterinary Oral Health Council.



## Owner's checklist

**HollyOak**  
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- ✓ Make an appointment with your vet for a professional examination of your pet's teeth and mouth
- ✓ Feed only the pet food recommended by your vet
- ✓ Don't allow your pet to chew hard objects. This is the most common cause of broken teeth in pets
- ✓ If possible, brush your pet's teeth regularly
- ✓ Arrange regular dental check ups with your vet so that your pet's oral hygiene can be monitored effectively

### FEEDING GUIDE

All Hill's products are extremely palatable foods that are eagerly accepted by most pets. However, when suffering from dental problems your pet may have a reduced appetite or be less willing to eat. If your pet does resist a change of food, the following tips may help:

- Introduce the new food gradually – mix it with your pet's usual food, adding more of it each day until you have completed the change-over
- If your pet refuses to eat for more than 48 hours, discuss the problem with your vet



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