

## **DENTAL HYGIENE – MORE THAN CHEWING RAWHIDE**

Poor Dental Health goes way beyond bad breath. Oral cavity infections are linked to serious health concerns such as:

- Tooth abscess (especially pre-molars and molars)
- Tooth loss (especially incisors)
- Bacterial infection of the heart, kidneys and liver

Our goal is to prevent periodontal disease which is related to plaque bacteria on the tooth surface. Did you know?

- Plaque bacteria can begin to colonize a clean tooth within 48 hours
- Even with a professional teeth cleaning, bacteria will begin to colonize the oral cavity within a few days
- 80% of dogs over 3 years of age and 50% of cats have Periodontal disease
- Periodic teeth cleaning is the cornerstone of dental health care
- Brushing a pet's teeth at least every other day decreases plaque bacteria. More is better! Once a week is not enough.
- Soft-bristled children's toothbrush is great
- The mechanical action of a toothbrush is the main factor in plaque removal
- Use of human toothpaste is discouraged since it contains Fluoride which should not be swallowed

Annual Dental Cleaning for all pets 3 years or older is highly recommended to prevent oral cavity disease.

Diets recommended for pets with advanced oral cavity disease:

- Science Diet Oral Care – Hill's
- Purina Veterinary Diet DH
- Friskies Feline Dental Diet
- IAMS Dental Defense Diet
- Eukanuba Adult Maintenance Diet for dogs
- Royal Canin Dental DD

\*note – this list is not all-inclusive

### **What about chew treats?**

Rawhide can help remove plaque and tartar. However, swallowing large pieces of rawhide could cause intestinal tract problems. Always discard small pieces that might be swallowed.

Chew treats that have earned the 'Veterinary Oral Health Council' seal of approval include:

- Tartar Check Dog Biscuits – Del Monte Pet Products
- Friskies Cheweez Beef hide Treats
- Hartz Dental Flavor Infused Chews
- Feline and Canine Greenies
- Vetradent Dog Chews – Vetradent

Some chew toys that are not recommended due to tendency to cause tooth fractures:

- Nylon bones
- Cow hooves
- Tennis balls

### **Pediatric Dentistry**

The most common pediatric problem is persistent deciduous (baby) teeth. This means that the permanent tooth erupts beside the baby tooth, preventing the baby tooth from falling out. Most baby teeth fall out between 4-6 months of age. Things to know:

- The front incisors and canine teeth are most commonly affected
- Persistent deciduous teeth occurs most often in toy and small dog breeds
- Simple extraction under sedation is recommended if these teeth are still present after 9 months of age.