

# YOUR PET'S DENTAL HEALTH

## *What Every Pet Owner Should Know*



*At Have A Heart Animal Hospital,  
we are committed to the health and  
well-being of your pet. Our approach  
to dental care is state of the art.*

### **Why should I get my pet's teeth cleaned?**

Veterinary Medicine has advanced in many of the same ways that human medicine has. We now know that poor dental care and poor dental health in your pet is linked to many other health problems.

### **Do I have to bring my pet to the hospital for a cleaning?**

No, routine cleaning should be done by you! All pet owners can prevent costly dental procedures, like surgery and extractions, by performing very simple and basic cleaning at home.

### **Why is a dental cleaning done at the hospital?**

Under anesthesia, our dental professionals complete a comprehensive inspection and evaluation of your pet's teeth, gums, and bones. An extensive cleaning is then performed and then your pet's teeth are sealed.

### *How do I know if my pet's teeth need cleaning?*

Your pet's teeth should be cleaned by a professional at least once per year, every year. If you notice any plaque, tartar, bleeding, swelling, strong odor, loss of appetite or anything else unusual, your pet's teeth should be evaluated immediately by your veterinarian.

### *How can I tell if my pet's teeth are bothering him/her?*

Watch for times that your pet has lost interest in the things he/she enjoys: eating, playing, chewing on toys; licking lips/ gums; and/or has bad breath.

### *Why does it cost so much more than a regular office visit?*

When your pet comes to Have A Heart Animal Hospital for a dental cleaning, we are actually performing a minor surgical procedure that requires anesthesia. Preanesthetic blood tests, dental X-Rays, sedation, dental sealants and necessary pain medications are all part of a professional cleaning procedure.

### *How often should my pet have a professional cleaning?*

Once a year is optimal for your pet's health.

### *What will happen if I don't have my pet's teeth cleaned?*

Discomfort and pain can be the result. This photograph displays pet dental disease, including severe dental tartar/ plaque, severe gingivitis and advanced periodontal disease. Left untreated, poor dental health can lead to bone infections, teeth extractions, systemic infections damaging the heart and kidneys; chronic anorexia and weight loss; and other medical problems resulting from chronic bacterial infection.

### *What are the symptoms of pet dental disease?*

Bad breath, loss of interest in playing and/or using the teeth (tug of war), crunchy treats/hard food; red or bleeding gums.

### *At what age should I start having my pet's teeth cleaned professionally?*

Your veterinarian should grade your pet's teeth at every annual examination and give you recommendations for your pet. Usually a dental grade of II or higher requires professional attention.

### *Can my pet be too old for a professional cleaning?*

A pet of ANY AGE can benefit from good dental health! We screen your senior pet (pets over the age of 7) with a senior blood screen and urinalysis before any professional dental procedure.

### *Does pet insurance pay for professional dental cleanings?*

Yes, some pet insurance does pay for professional dental cleanings. Check with your insurance provider for details.

***Our professional staff is available to answer all your questions and are happy to help you learn more about your pet's dental health. Just ask us!***