



PERIODONTAL DISEASE

ABOUT THE DISEASE

Dental disease, or periodontal disease, is inflammation of the structures supporting teeth, including the gums and the ligaments that hold the teeth in place – weakening teeth overall.

Cause: Plaque buildup on teeth feeds bacteria overgrowth and swelling. Plaque hardens to tartar (calculus) that brushing won't remove. Bacteria trigger immune attack, destroying tissues.

How common: #1 mouth issue in dogs/cats. Builds slowly, spreads to most teeth.

Signs: Bad breath first. Then: red/bleeding gums, visible tartar, loose/missing teeth, trouble eating, bloody saliva.

Advanced periodontal disease can lead to tooth root abscess or even tooth loss. See the [Tooth Root Abscess](#) document.

OBTAINING A DIAGNOSIS

Annual vet exam: Spots gingivitis, tartar, tooth loss easily.

Full check (at least once per year): Anesthesia lets us inspect/clean whole mouth + take x-rays of tooth roots.

4 Stages: Guides decisions—save the tooth or pull it.

TREATMENT

Severity guides plan: Treatment is dependent upon the severity of disease, which is checked during annual examination and anesthetized procedure. Advanced cases often need extractions. Antibiotics are only a temporary solution, and are often given first if oral infection is bad enough.

Anesthesia for seniors: They often need oral care the most. Pre-examination + pre-screening bloodwork helps spot anesthetic risks. Most moderate anesthetic protocols provide low-risk drugs work for nearly any pet.

Home prevention: Daily brushing with enzymatic toothpaste fights plaque best. Treats/water additives help less. Pick VOHC-sealed products.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Maintain good oral health throughout a patient's young years of life to minimize necessity at an older age.
 - This includes regular veterinary examinations.
- Routine dental cleanings are the best way to maintain patient oral health and limit the need for tooth extractions