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Dental Care - Don't forget your Pet

How do I know if my pet has a dental problem?

An astounding 80 percent of dogs and 70 percent of cats show signs of oral disease by age 3, according to the American Veterinary Dental Society. Pets hide dental disease very well. They may continue to eat and drink even when teeth are loose or rotten. Some common signs that your pet needs professional dental care are:

- Bad breath
- Yellow or brown tartar buildup
- Red and inflamed gums
- Excessive drooling
- Pawing or rubbing at the mouth or head
- Bleeding from the mouth
- Reluctance to eat or to play with chew toys
- Swelling around the eye or chronic discharge from the eyes
- Broken or discolored teeth

What is involved in a dental cleaning?

A veterinary dental cleaning for a pet is very similar to the cleaning a person receives. Pets do need to be anesthetized to do a complete exam and cleaning. Each tooth is examined, calculus (plaque) is removed, the teeth are polished and a protective barrier is applied. If teeth can not be saved, they are removed. There are veterinary dental specialists that can provide more specialized care if a pet requires special procedures.

How much does a dental cleaning cost?

The cost of a dental cleaning has a very wide range. Fees are based on severity plus cost for preoperative testing, anesthesia, necessary therapy and medication. Often the true extent of the procedure is not known until the animal is anesthetized and each tooth is examined. Your veterinary clinic should be able to give a price range after an oral examination is done.

How do I prevent dental disease?

The best way to prevent dental disease is to brush your pet's teeth on a daily basis. A soft bristle brush or finger brush should be used. There are animal toothpastes available. Do not use human toothpaste as it can be harmful to the pet if swallowed. There are many other products for dental care including chews, dental toys, treats, liquids, pastes, gels or water additives.

Websites to learn more.

www.petdental.com

www.cetdental.com