

## **Dental Health is Pet Health**

What would your human dentist say if you didn't brush your teeth? Can you image the cost of your dental care, and the infection that would be present in your mouth if you didn't go to the dentist for years? Pets have teeth just like we do. The difference is that they cannot talk and tell us when their mouth is painful. Just because they are still eating does not mean they are not in severe pain. As pets live longer, healthier lives, veterinary dentistry has become a core part of keeping pets healthy.

### **Plan for Regular Care**

The cost of regular professional dental care should be considered when purchasing or adopting a pet. Small breed dogs build up infection quicker in their mouth. Certain breeds, such as Poodle, Chihuahua, Dachshund, Shih Tzu, Yorkie and other small breeds, need professional dental cleanings yearly. Larger breeds such as Labradors may go longer before a professional cleaning is needed, but should still be check regularly. Many veterinary clinics offer payment options such as Care Credit or scheduled direct withdrawals from your account to help budget for dental expenses. At The Zimmerman Veterinary Clinic, we have the Oral Health for Life Program. Pets under 3 years of age and Pets that have had a dental cleaning in the last 18 months, receive 25% off their dental cleaning.

### **Professional Cleaning**

A professional dental cleaning is done at your veterinarian's office under general anesthesia. This is the only way your pet's teeth can be cleaned and evaluated properly. Most clinics do this as a day procedure where the pet is admitted to the hospital in the morning and discharged the same evening. Veterinarians take many precautions to make the procedure as safe as possible for your pet, and they have standards similar to human medicine such as using an IV catheter and fluids and monitoring blood pressure, ECG and other vital values. Bloodwork is done to check that important organ function is normal. Even special warming blankets are used to keep your pet's temperature stable during the procedure.

During the professional dental cleaning, the doctor will probe and chart all the teeth, x-rays are taken if needed and then the technician cleans, scales and polishes all the teeth and applies a fluoride treatment and temporary sealant.

### **Home Care**

Daily home dental care is needed to maintain your pet's mouth in-between professional dental cleanings. There are many products available for pets including tooth brushes, water additives, chews, and rinses. Home care does not take the place of professional cleanings.

### **Happier, Healthier Life**

Regular home and professional dental care means a healthier, happier pet. The cost of prevention is a lot less expensive than treatments needed for advanced dental disease such as dental extractions, oral surgery and treatment for multi-organ problems. Best of all, studies have shown your pet will live 20% longer. Who doesn't want more time with their best friend?

Disclaimer: This written content is meant to be educational and is not medical advice. Always consult a veterinarian about medical advice for your pet.