

Pet Dental Month

- Designed to bring attention to the dental and oral health of our companions, as it is often missed!
- Adult dogs have 42 teeth, and adult cats have 30 teeth.
- 80% of dogs and 70% of cats have some form of periodontal disease by the age of 3.
- Most dental disease occurs below the gum line where the owner can't see it, plus it is often difficult to perform a thorough oral examination while a pet is awake. Many owners have no idea just how bad their pet's mouth is!
- Cats are more prone to a unique process called "tooth resorption", which can cause gingivitis and mouth pain even if the teeth look clean from the outside. Almost 75% of cats greater than 5 years of age have some level of tooth resorption.
- Regularly brushing your pet's teeth is the single most effective thing you can do at home, although it is probably the single hardest thing you can do! Daily brushing is ideal, but several times per week is still effective.
- There are many resources available to help guide you into a tooth brushing routine- advice/demonstrations from your veterinary office, online videos and reading material, etc.
- Make sure to bring your pet for at least a yearly examination with their veterinarian. We make sure an oral exam and evaluation of the teeth is part of each visit with the doctor, and we make recommendations accordingly.
- Each clinic will be different with regards to the quality of dental services that they provide. The ideal dental follows standards set by the American Animal Hospital Association, and includes an anesthetized oral exam, full mouth radiographs, and appropriate treatment of the teeth including extractions as needed. Many owners are afraid of having their pet's teeth removed, but they are able to eat just fine even without teeth, and chewing with painful wiggly teeth is no better!
- Make sure to offer your dog appropriate chew toys. Although many dogs are lucky and don't end up with problems, bones are hard enough to fracture the teeth which puts them at risk for tooth root abscesses. Best chance of chewing success comes from checking toys for a VOHC label (which stands for veterinary oral health council), making sure not to offer abrasive toys to chew (like tennis balls) that can wear the teeth down, and generally not offering anything too hard – you should be able to make an indent with your thumb nail, or whack it against your knee without pain.