

Dental Health

You may already know that not taking care of your dog's teeth can lead to periodontal disease, a condition that results in bleeding gums, bad breath, and ultimately tooth loss.

But did you know that poor oral hygiene is also linked to other health issues in dogs, including diabetes and heart disease, and it can even lead to a broken jaw. And because dogs are experts at hiding pain, you may not even realize there's a problem.

Dental disease sets off your dog's immune system

Periodontal disease starts under the gumline with a substance called plaque, which is made up of bacteria. Left on the tooth surface and in the area surrounding the tooth, plaque incites the animal's immune system and an inflammatory response ensues, starting with gingivitis.

The more severe the dental disease and the more inflammation present, the more likely it is that bacteria may enter the bloodstream and travel to other parts of the body.

Periodontal disease can cause: Tooth loss, Oral pain, Heart disease, Liver disease, Infection

Dental disease is regarded as a "hidden disease" as it can cause your dog pain that you can't detect

Dogs rarely show signs that they're in pain, and if they're behaving and eating as usual, it may appear as if nothing is wrong. That's an incorrect assumption.

Appetite is a strong drive. It is easy to avoid biting on a painful tooth. We all have seen dogs 'inhaling' hard food without chewing. But it is obvious that they can suffer from oral pathology because owners frequently remark that 'they are just like a puppy again' after treatment, adding that they regret postponing care."

Most pet parents only notice the bad breath caused by plaque, and that alone is reason enough to have your veterinarian examine your dog's teeth. Usually by the time serious signs come up, it is too late to save the tooth, and there is a high likelihood the pet has been living quietly in pain for quite some time.

Spot the signs of Periodontal Disease: Bad breath, tartar at the gum line, loose or broken teeth, excess drooling, swelling of the face, sneezing, discoloured teeth.

Dental disease increases the risk for dog heart disease

The heart and liver are especially prone to developing inflammation from dental disease.

There is evidence that periodontal disease is linked to cardiopulmonary diseases like endocarditis, according to the World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA).

The risk of endocarditis is about six times higher in dogs with stage three (moderate to severe) periodontal disease than for dogs without it, says the WSAVA report.

One key piece of evidence, Dr. Bannon says, is that the cultured bacteria from infected heart valves are the same as those also identified in the mouth.

Dental disease complicates diabetes in dogs

Diabetic dogs tend to have higher levels of periodontal disease. The more severe the periodontal disease is, the more serious the diabetes gets.

This is especially important in terms of complicating the control and regulation of diabetic animals. Inflammation and infection decrease the body's sensitivity to insulin, a primary hormone involved in blood-sugar regulation.

It's difficult to balance a dog's diabetes until the periodontal disease is treated. Once that tooth is addressed, their diabetes is much easier to stabilize.

Dental disease can lead to a broken jaw

Poor oral hygiene can lead to a broken jaw in dogs, especially smaller breeds. with disproportionately large teeth, such as Chihuahuas, Lhasa Apsos, Maltese, and Shih Tzus.

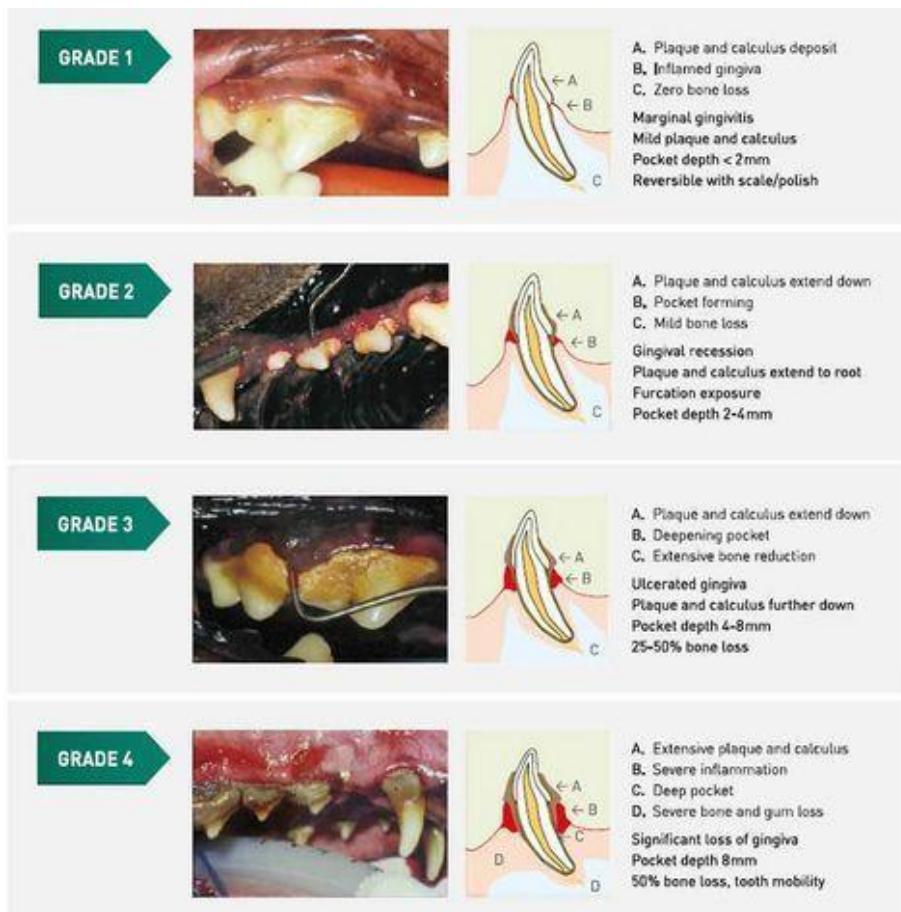
Infection to these dogs' mouths can weaken their relatively small jaws, and something as simple as jumping off the couch can lead to jaw fracture.

Sometimes fractures can even happen after teeth have been removed. This is because without teeth, the lower jaw is weak.

Taking care of your dog's teeth can prevent health issues

The most effective way to prevent these conditions is to maintain a solid oral hygiene regimen, which should include regular cleaning of your dog's teeth and gums.

Additionally, you should take your dog for annual oral exams, and when needed, an anesthetized oral examination with a full tooth-by-tooth exam and dental X-rays.



Taking caring of your dog's oral hygiene is about much more than clean teeth and fresh breath, it's a health issue.