

## Some Questions About Dental Care For Your Pet

### 1. What is tartar gingivitis?

Tartar, or dental calculus, is the build up of food, bacteria, serum and residues on your pet's teeth that leads to gingivitis.

### 2. Can dirty teeth be harmful to my pet?

Dirty teeth will cause bad breath, eventual loss of teeth due to infection, and may even lead to a generalized infection in your pet due to the bacteria entering the bloodstream. This may eventually lead to valvular heart disease.

### 3. What do you do when you clean my pet's teeth?

Your pet is given a physical exam and any laboratory work that should be done is done prior to the procedure. Your pet is then given a general anesthetic so that ultrasonic cleaning and necessary extractions may be performed. Fluoride is applied to each tooth after polishing to prevent further tooth decay.

### 4. What is expected of me?

Your pet should have no food or water 12 hours prior to the anesthetic. We suggest that you bring your pet to the hospital between 7:30 AM and 9:00 AM so we can start the procedures early in the morning, allowing you to pick up your pet that afternoon.

### 5. What about extractions?

Only your veterinarian can determine which teeth should be extracted and which loose teeth can be saved. This is determined under anesthesia. Many patients with advanced periodontal disease lose the periodontal attachment. When the tartar is removed, a tooth may become mobile because of the loss; and the tooth falls out.

### 6. What about antibiotics?

Antibiotics are often given prior to and then after the cleaning and extractions to fight any bacteria which might have gotten into the bloodstream.

### 7. What can I do at home after cleaning?

This is probably the most important part of the whole procedure. The gums and teeth are often a little sensitive for three to four days after cleaning so you should feed only canned or well-moistened dry food for one week. Daily cleaning with an approved dentifrice will retard the formation of tartar and gingivitis.

### 8. How often should my pet's teeth be cleaned?

Generally speaking, your pet's teeth should be cleaned one time yearly; but this will depend on the condition of the mouth, gums and teeth.