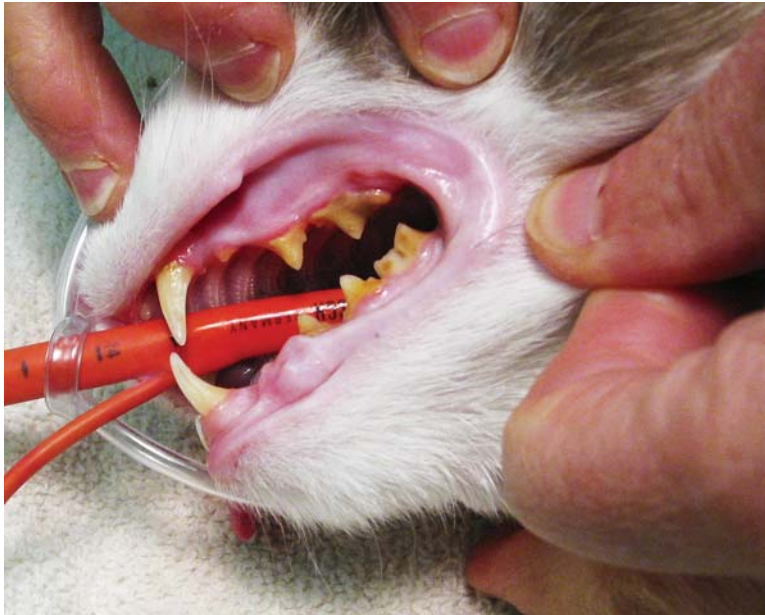


**DENTAL DISEASE OVERVIEW**

Dental (periodontal) disease is initiated by bacteria adhering to the teeth in a substance called plaque. Plaque is composed almost entirely of bacteria with some sugars and proteins to hold them together. If not removed, plaque will extend under the gum line where the bacteria will secrete toxins, causing inflammation. This in turn results in damage and possible destruction of the tooth's attachment.

Periodontal disease is broken up into two entities, gingivitis and periodontitis.



Before Dental Cleaning - (above)

The same cat - After Dental Cleaning - (below)



**Gingivitis** is the initial, reversible stage in which the inflammation is confined to the gums (gingiva). This inflammation may be reversed by dental cleaning and home-care (brushing). Gingivitis, if left untreated, may progress to periodontitis.

**Periodontitis** is the more advanced irreversible stage in which the inflammation affects the bone and soft tissues (supporting structures) of the tooth resulting in their destruction. While it is irreversible, it is possible to arrest its progression with proper professional therapy and home care.

- WHAT TO LOOK FOR**
- Yellow and brown tartar**
  - Red inflamed gums**
  - Bleeding**
  - Bad breath**
  - Difficulty chewing**
  - Change in eating habits**
  - Change in behaviour**

**IMPORTANT POINTS**

Dental disease is a progressive condition in pets. By two years of age, about 80% of dogs and 70% of cats have some degree of dental disease and by five years of age, 95% of dogs have evidence of periodontal disease.

Before initiating dental hygiene at home, have a thorough oral examination by a veterinarian. There are many dental problems that you may not be aware of, such as: exposed roots, tartar, diseased gums, tooth fractures and root abscesses.

After a dental cleaning the only way to keep your pet's teeth clean is by brushing. "Brush, Brush, Brush!" Within a few hours of consuming food, plaque can form on the tooth and visible calculus (tartar) builds up in two days.

In addition to brushing, other preventatives include, giving chew toys, oral rinses, healthy dental treats and dental diets.

