



24 HOUR EMERGENCY SERVICE

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## DOES YOUR PET HAVE UNHEALTHY TEETH?

Due to improvements in diets and veterinary care, our pets are living longer. This means their teeth need to last longer too as (like us) they only get one set of teeth to last a lifetime. So, again like us, regular oral care and checkups are important for your pet.

Warning signs of unhealthy teeth can include:

- Bad breath
- Excessive drooling
- Red and swollen gums
- Yellow-brown discolouration near the gum line
- Pain or bleeding when eating
- Decreased appetite
- Difficulty eating
- Loose or missing teeth

If your pet is showing any of these signs, it may mean they have dental disease which can lead to dangerous infections. Dental disease in our pets is similar to dental disease in humans – it starts with a buildup of plaque on the teeth. If this plaque is not removed with regular brushing or chewing, it goes on to form calculus (or tartar). The calculus provides a great breeding ground for bacteria which invade under the gum line, causing gum disease (gingivitis). If left untreated, the bacterial infection can destroy the bony tooth roots (causing the teeth to fall out) and get into the blood stream which can affect important internal organs such as the heart and kidneys.

Dental problems may be caused by poor oral hygiene, unsuitable food, breed factors (same number of teeth squashed in to a shorter snout) and the age of your pet. Some of the ways to prevent teeth problems include brushing your pet's teeth, giving chew toys or raw bones and regular dental checkups. Dental checkups are included in your pet's annual health check and vaccination, but if your pet hasn't had an annual health check in a while or is showing any of the signs discussed above, please make an appointment for a dental check.

We can help you work out the best options for your pet. Some cases of dental disease can be managed by changing the diet, but others may require professional cleaning of the plaque and calculus. We do this cleaning under anaesthetic as we have to clean the plaque both above and below the gum line to prevent further gum disease. The teeth cleaning we do is the same as at your dentist – cleaning, ultrasonic scaling and polishing so your pet will have that fresh mouth feel (and smell)! If the dental disease has affected the tooth roots, we may need to extract some teeth and your pet may also need antibiotics.

For the months of July and August, Cowra Veterinary Centre is offering a free bag of dental dog or cat food with every dental cleaning procedure. Please phone 6341 3113 to make an appointment with one of our friendly vets or nurses to discuss your pet's dental needs.

**Peter Launder**

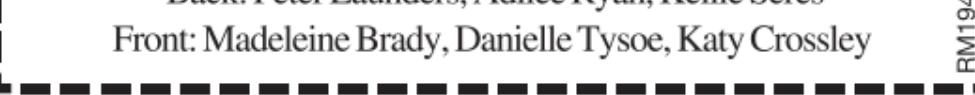
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**The team at Cowra Veterinary Centre**

Back: Peter Launder, Adilee Ryan, Kellie Seres

Front: Madeleine Brady, Danielle Tysoe, Katy Crossley