



## Mountainview Animal Hospital

Dr. Stephanie Ewing BSc., DVM

### The bottom Line

Like people, animals need professional dental care on a routine basis. This cleaning will require your pet to be put under anesthesia. Recent advances in anesthetic techniques have greatly reduced the risk previously associated with this procedure.



Come on, give me a kiss.

C.E.T. Enzymatic Chews reduce plaque by 19 % when fed twice daily.

Medi-cal's Dental Formula reduces tartar by 62% and plaque by 15% as compared to other dry commercial diets.



### PETS HAVE TEETH TOO

Would you believe that the most common disease seen by veterinarians is dental disease? Almost 80 percent of dogs and cats develop periodontal disease by 5 years of age. Surprised? We really shouldn't be. We brush our teeth several times daily, have our teeth professionally cleaned every 4 to 6 months and yet we still get gingivitis and cavities. So why do we not realize the same would happen to our pets, especially since they don't have an oral hygiene protocol? Our pets just don't complain about oral discomfort and pain. How could they? The only way to indicate oral pain is to stop eating; well there is certainly nothing to be gained by starving. So our pets keep eating. Sometimes we may notice that while they may be eating, they are not chewing their food, instead they are swallowing their kibbles whole. But mostly, the only sign we have that there is a problem is that bad smell we have to endure when they lick our faces or pant in our direction. Unfortunately, by the time we notice the bad breath, we already have quite a problem. The process of dental disease begins long before the bad smell occurs.

When we don't brush our teeth, the bacteria in our mouths produce a slimy layer called plaque. Plaque coats our teeth and gums and even gets up under the gum line. After a few days plaque begins to harden into tartar. Tartar is the yellowish brown deposit on your pet's teeth. Tartar cannot be brushed off. As plaque and tartar develop it causes redness and swelling of the gums, called gingivitis. Gingivitis is the first stage of gum disease. Fortunately, this stage can still be treated.

First, we start by professionally cleaning your pet's teeth. This is the worrisome part for most pet owners. Most people are concerned about the general anesthetic required to do this job properly. Fortunately, the anesthetics we use today are very safe and well tolerated by our pets; even the very old ones. Besides, to do nothing about the disease in their mouths is not a better option. Once your pet has recovered from the dentistry, usually within a few days, your job begins. Preventing the build up of

plaque and tartar, and the development of gingivitis again requires a daily effort. The best way to do this is for us to brush our pet's teeth. Unfortunately, not all of our furry friends will cooperate with this harmless procedure. For those pets, we rely on products like dental diets, special chews like C.E.T. chews, and Maxiguard oral cleansing gel to help us out. As good as these products are though; none of them are a perfect substitute for brushing, particularly for plaque and tartar below the gum line.

If we do not treat the gingivitis it will continue to worsen into periodontal disease. Periodontal disease is the infection of the tissues that surround the teeth, resulting in the breakdown of the attachments of the teeth to the sockets. The symptoms of periodontal disease include bad breath, swollen, red, tender gums and an accumulation of tartar on the teeth. In the more advanced stages, the gums may recede, bleed, and become painful. More tartar develops trapping pus beneath the gum line. As the abscess deepens, the teeth loosen in their sockets. Although we tend to think of periodontal disease as an oral problem, the whole body quickly becomes affected. Bacteria from infected gums gain access to your pet's blood stream, reaping havoc with the immune system, heart, lungs, liver and kidneys. Tiny micro-abscesses form in these organs causing permanent damage. Once established, periodontal disease cannot be cured. It is only through extensive veterinary intervention under general anesthetic and post surgical home care that periodontal disease can be controlled. For this reason prevention is so important.



As part of our commitment to your pet's oral health, we would be happy to help you begin a simple prevention program. At our open house in May we will be focusing on dental care. We will be having a demonstration on tooth brushing, dental diets and other oral care products. We hope to see you there. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to ask us about your pet's dental care.

## The bottom Line

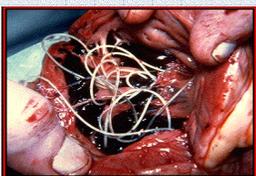
The sharp increase in the prevalence of Leptospirosis in recent years may be associated with the growing urban wildlife population and warmer fall temperatures.

Although the newer Leptospirosis vaccine is considered safe, some dogs do have reactions to this vaccine. If your dog has had any type of reaction to medication in the past, please inform us prior to having him or her vaccinated against Leptospirosis.



**Caution!** Some flea products marketed in the pet stores to dogs are extremely toxic to cats. Always read the label carefully; better yet, ask us about choosing the safest products for your pets.

An infected dog can have over 200 heartworms in the heart and adjoining blood vessels.



## LIFE ACCORDING TO NIKE

Nike has a boyfriend. Well, maybe he is not as much a boyfriend as an admirer. Harley is a handsome long haired orange tabby who has been hospitalized a few times for constipation problems. Each time he is here he seems to catch Nike's attention, sort of. He prances at the front of his kennel, rolls his head, makes cute little cat noises and watches closely for Nike's response. He tries so hard to be charming. His efforts have not gone completely unnoticed. Nike approaches his kennel and sits beneath it watching Harley's display. And then, in true princess fashion, she gets up, snorts disapprovingly, turns and walks away. Harley, humiliated by her rejection (and by the fact he can't poop properly), retreats to the corner to lick his emotional wounds. Even in the cat world, love hurts.



## IT'S HEARTWORM & FLEA SEASON AGAIN.

Because we know how important your pets are to you, we are reminding you that flea and heartworm season is once again fast approaching and your pets will need protection against these terrible parasites.

Both cats and dogs are at risk of becoming infested with fleas during our warm summer months. Fleas are extremely irritating to your pet. Flea bites can cause itchy skin rashes and even serious allergic reactions. Left untreated, just 10 adult fleas can multiply to over 250,000 fleas in only 30 days!

Your pet can come into contact with fleas on walks, at the park, or even in your backyard; though most pets get fleas by having contact with other animals that are infested with fleas.



Those of you who have had fleas in the past know how difficult it is to get rid of them; prevention of flea infestations is much easier, cost effective and safe.

## DOES YOUR DOG NEED A LEPTOSPIROSIS VACCINE THIS SPRING?

Leptospirosis is a serious and often fatal bacterial disease that can afflict dogs, and occasionally humans.

Dogs most commonly become infected by drinking from rivers, streams, puddles or ponds that have become contaminated by the urine of other infected animals (raccoons, rats and skunks).

Fortunately, there is a vaccine available. If your dog has not been vaccinated for Leptospirosis in the past six months, and he or she goes camping, cottaging or for runs in areas where there may be standing bodies of water to drink from, please call us to schedule an appointment to have your dog protected against this terrible disease.

Our dogs have an additional risk during the summer; the common mosquito can spread the deadly heartworm to your dog. The heartworm is a long slender worm that lives in your dog's heart and lungs causing permanent and potentially fatal damage.

Fortunately, prevention is so easy. Simply give your dog the preventative medication once a month from June through November. There are various types of heartworm medication available; some will also include prevention for intestinal worms and/or fleas. Blood testing your dog prior to starting the medication is an important part of prevention and is strongly recommended. Early detection of a heartworm infection before your dog gets sick will not only increase the success of the treatment and ensure a complete recovery, but will also help reduce the spread of the disease.

**Please do not hesitate to contact our office for guidance in choosing the safest and most effective flea and heartworm protection for your pet.**

## SURVEY RESULT AND A WARM THANK YOU

In our last newsletter we asked you if discontinuing Saturday appointments would be too much of an inconvenience to you as our clients. Of course, the office would remain open for medication, food or pet pick ups. We were overwhelmed by your response and support. 97.6% of you felt that the extended office hours we offer during the week were sufficient and that Saturday medical appointments were unnecessary. Most of you also wrote very warm and generous comments of support and approval. We were touched by your comments and consider ourselves very lucky to have such wonderfully caring clients. So thank you very much for your support and I will enjoy my Saturdays off.

## The bottom Line

Human toothpaste is not recommended for animals; the high detergent content causes foaming, which tends to create anxiety and stomach upset in our pets.

We carry a variety of flavoured toothpastes designed specifically for use in animals



As a general rule, if you would not want to hit yourself in the knee with a toy, your pet should not be chewing on it. Very hard toys and bone may cause them to break their teeth.

A Kong is a hard rubber toy approved by the V.O.H.C. It comes in red, black, blue striped and solid blue. The different colours indicate differences in durability. The solid blue Kongs, available only at veterinary hospitals, are the strongest.



## HOW TO BRUSH YOUR PET'S TEETH

The single most effective method of removing plaque, both above and below the gum line, is the mechanical action of brushing. Ideally your pet's teeth should be brushed daily using a veterinary toothpaste and a soft bristle toothbrush. Most puppies and kittens can be trained to accept tooth brushing if you start early, use praise and treats, and make it a pleasant experience. Even many older pets can learn to enjoy having their teeth brushed, but before you begin, it is wise to ensure that their teeth and gums are healthy and pain free.

- ☺ Start by handling your pet's mouth and rubbing his or her gums, first with your finger, then a gauze square or a cloth. Do this only when your pet is relaxed and is enjoying the attention.
- ☺ Next, introduce your pet to the toothpaste by letting him or her lick it off your finger. Many animals enjoy the flavour of the toothpaste. Cats seem to prefer the chicken flavour; dogs like the taste of either the chicken or malt. Many pets will think of it as a treat.
- ☺ After a few days of practice, introduce your pet to the toothbrush. Apply a bit of toothpaste to the brush and let your pet smell and lick it.
- ☺ To brush the upper teeth, gently place your free hand over your pet's muzzle and lift the lip with your thumb or fingers. Place the toothbrush against the teeth and begin brushing the teeth and gum line.
- ☺ Be gentle and give your pet lots of praise.
- ☺ Initially, you may only be able to brush one or two teeth at a time. You may gradually increase the tooth brushing sessions as your pet begins to enjoy the process.
- ☺ To access the lower teeth, use your free hand to gently pull down the lower lip.
- ☺ Most pets will not tolerate having the inside of their teeth brushed, nor is it usually necessary, most of the gingivitis develops on the cheek side of the teeth.
- ☺ Ideally, your pet's teeth should be brushed every day, to prevent gingivitis. Remember, it takes less than 3 days for plaque to begin calcifying into tartar.

## WHAT TOYS ARE SAFE FOR MY PET TO CHEW ON?

Surprisingly, many of the toys that are marketed to our pets are unsafe and damaging to their teeth. Although our pets are blessed with much stronger teeth than our own, many products can cause serious wear or dental fractures, particularly in dogs that are aggressive chewers. The following is a list of products approved or disapproved by the Veterinary Oral Health Council (V.O.H.C.):

### Recommended products

- ☺ Rubber chew toys such as Kong or Gumabone products
- ☺ Non-compressed rawhide bones
- ☺ Non-compressed rawhide chews with antibacterial enzyme coating, e.g. C.E.T Enzymatic Chews

### Products not recommended as chew toys for our pets

- ☺ Real bones
- ☺ Hard plastic chew toys
- ☺ Nylon bones
- ☺ Compressed rawhide bones
- ☺ Cow hooves
- ☺ Pigs ears
- ☺ Dentabones
- ☺ Rope toys
- ☺ Ice cubes
- ☺ Rocks
- ☺ Tennis balls - the felt wears down the teeth

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**INVITES YOU TO OUR OPEN HOUSE!**

**SUNDAY MAY 7<sup>TH</sup>, 2006**

**FROM**

**1 PM TO 4 PM**

To show our appreciation to our wonderful community, we are having an Open House.

Weather permitting we will be having a barbeque.

Come meet our staff, tour the clinic, enjoy the barbeque and play some games.

*Everyone is welcome to attend, including your furry friends.*

So, come join us for an exciting and educational day.

**FOOD**

**FUN**

**GAMES**

Representatives will be available to answer your questions about heartworm disease and dental care for your pets.

## **DENTAL CARE DEMONSTRATION**

Learn how to brush your pet's teeth  
and how the proper diet can help keep your pet's teeth clean.



333 Mountainview Road South, unit # 4

We are located in the South Georgetown Center, on the North East corner of Mountainview and Argyll roads  
905-702-8822

**\* \* \* MARK YOUR CALENDARS \* \* \***