



## A Note from Compassionate Veterinary Care

We are proud to offer this very special issue of *Pawstreet* concerning a very important part of your pets health: the care and maintenance of their mouth, teeth and gums.

Inside you'll find information on diagnosis and treatment of periodontitis. It is a common gum disease which, if left untreated, may shorten your pet's life by several years! You'll find out what you can do at home to effectively protect your dog or cat from this damaging condition. And you'll find a money-saving coupon that really makes cents.

## The Animals' Fund

Barry is a happy little dog that nearly lost his life because of a treatable injury that required multiple costly surgeries. Barry's owner lost hope. But when Dr. Shanan met Barry he proposed a plan: it entailed appealing to the generosity of surgeon Dr. Doug Hammer of Norwood Park Animal Hospital; Barry's owner paying as much as she could afford; and raising funds to cover the difference. Barry is now completing his recovery and doing well.

Barry's story inspired all of us at Compassionate Veterinary Care to establish a new fund – "The Animals' Fund" - that could help Barry and other animals in need of medical treatment that their owners cannot afford. We know you – our clients and patrons – care deeply about animals and we hope that you will find the Compassionate Veterinary Care "Animals' Fund" worthy of your financial support. Donations of any amount will be appreciated and acknowledged!



A PET-LOVING PUBLICATION FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT COMPASSIONATE VETERINARY CARE

## Compassionate Veterinary Care First Santa Paws event was a total success!

**In name of the animals in need - many purry, squirmy, licky and drooly thanks!**

We had so much fun with our furry friends that came to have their pictures taken with Santa Paws, AKA Dr. Shanan, on Saturday December 11th! You can see the jolly photos in our reception area and on our website. Many thanks to our photographer Sheri Berliner, whose incredible talent and patience captured those great images.



We were overwhelmed by your generosity as the donations for animals in need kept pouring in during the month of December. The following are excerpts from a letter sent to us by Ms. Charlie Propson, President of Friends of Chicago Animal Care and Control [FCACC], the beneficiary of your generosity:



**Dear Compassionate Veterinary Care Staff and Clients,**

*On behalf of Friends of Chicago Animal care and control, I thank you from the bottom of our collective hearts for your generous donations this holiday season for the city's neediest animals.*

*• Baby food you donated was used immediately to feed some very new little puppies, brought to a shelter a day after being born outside in the snow.*

- Fleece blankets turned into smaller blankets to provide comfort for the many cats in cages at CACC.*
- Washable hard toys will give puppies at CACC much needed stimulation.*
- Your cash donations, which totaled \$500, will be used to pay for spay/neuter surgeries and other foster care program costs.*

*Again, thank you for your generosity. We are most grateful to include you in our Friends family.*

*Sincerely,  
Friends of Chicago Animal Care and Control*

CHEW ON THIS

# Let's Talk Teeth



VETERINARY DENTAL CARE

## Oral exams and cleanings

*You probably think that your dog or cat is one in a million. They would gladly settle for an owner who's merely one in ten, because only one in ten owners takes proper care of their pet's teeth.*



### It's National Pet Dental Health Month

February is National Pet Dental Health Month, an appropriate time to call attention to this vital area of year-round pet owner responsibility. Four out of five cats and dogs over the age of three will be affected by periodontal disease. In fact, oral disease is the number one health problem diagnosed in small animals.

#### Four Steps in the Right Direction

**Compassionate Veterinary Care** recommends a four-step dental care program to protect your pet's health. Chew on this for awhile and keep your pet on the winning - and grinning - side:

#### STEP ONE: ANNUAL EXAM

It begins with a thorough dental examination by your veterinarian. Most pets 4 years and older need such a thorough exam at least once a year to prevent irreversible damage to gums and teeth. Correctly treating dental problems requires an accurate diagnosis, which requires your pet to be safely anesthetized. Dental x-rays are taken

so problems in their early stages can be diagnosed and treated. After the exam is completed, while your pet is still sedated, a dental cleaning can be performed, including removal of tartar above and below the gum line, polishing, and fluoride treatment. Some dogs and cats may need to have this thorough exam more than once a year.

#### STEP TWO: DAILY BRUSHING

You've got opposable thumbs and your pet doesn't - so do what's right: brush their teeth daily! Start when they're young to get them used to it, but it's never too late to begin proper home dental care. Initial brushing sessions should be very short - you may be brushing only 1 or 2 teeth a day! Increase the length of the daily brushing session very slowly, so your pet doesn't develop an aversion to the activity. Reward the animal with a treat, favorite toy or activity, so they'll associate the brushing with something they like. A variety of special pet toothbrushes, toothpastes and other products are available to assist in making your effort as effective as possible.

#### STEP THREE: CHOOSING THE RIGHT FOOD

Next, address your pet's diet. Look for the "Seal of Acceptance of the Veterinary Oral Health Council" on foods to determine if they meet standards for plaque and tartar control.

Dog biscuits [as well as the "professional" brushing offered at some pet stores] will remove some of the most easy to see tartar, but not below the gum line where periodontal disease is most damaging. They're no substitute for daily brushing!

#### STEP FOUR: REGULAR CHECKUPS

Regular checkups are imperative to ensure good oral health.

Your veterinarian will monitor your pet's progress, praise your prevention efforts at home, and make sure dental problems aren't rearing their ugly heads up ahead of schedule.

Puppies and kittens are born without teeth. That's the good news. Six to eight weeks later they'll develop a full set of baby teeth - and a potential set of problems. The American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) recommends that veterinary dental care begin at this early stage, evaluating puppies and kittens for issues related to healthy oral development. An oral exam is routinely performed as part of all physical exams. Your veterinarian will look for developmental anomalies, the accumulation of plaque and tartar, periodontal disease, and oral tumors.

A more thorough examination, including dental cleaning, requires a short-lasting anesthetic and should be done at least annually once your pet reaches adulthood.

During the dental examination under anesthesia, AAHA recommends the following:

- **Pre-anesthetic exam.** This will make sure your pet is healthy enough to undergo anesthesia. Blood, urine, electrocardiograph and X-ray tests may also be conducted to check for any dangerous heart, kidney or other conditions.

- **Anesthesia monitoring.** The monitoring and recording of your pet's vital signs is important to help ensure her safety while under anesthesia.

- **Dental X-rays.** Radiographs (X-rays) help detect abnormalities that cannot be found by examination alone, so they can be properly treated. In some cases, X-rays can confirm the need for extraction of teeth that are loose or badly infected.

- **Scaling and polishing.** Veterinarians remove plaque and calculus from your pet's teeth, using instruments similar to those used by human dentists. A special polishing paste smoothes out scratches in the tooth enamel.

- **Fluoride/sealants.** The application of an anti-plaque substance, such as a fluoride treatment and/or a barrier sealant, can help strengthen and desensitize teeth as well as decrease future plaque.



IT'S EASIER THAN YOU MAY THINK

# Brushing Your Pet's Pearly Whites

YUK! Imagine what your teeth would be like if you didn't brush them for a year. Talk about bad breath! And disease! On second thought, don't.

Now consider that your pet can't brush his own teeth. And **MAYBE** you take him to the vet for a dental cleaning once a year.

## GET THE IDEA?

The best preventive step for pets is the same as it is for people: brush regularly. In their case, of course, they need some help.



*Gradually introduce toothpaste on your finger and gently rub in a circular motion.*



*Place bristles at gum line, and at a 45-degree angle, brush in an oval pattern.*



*Cover three to four teeth at a time and use ten short back-and-forth motions.*

Before even asking your unsuspecting pet to open wide, you'll need the right attitude: you're going to teach her to love it! As with any training, the trick is to start early, keep sessions short and positive, and proceed slowly.

First, dip a finger into beef bouillon for dogs or tuna water for cats. Rub the soaked finger gently over the pet's gums and teeth in a circular motion. Next, let them lick it off a toothbrush. When your pet accepts this activity, he's ready for the real thing. Praise and reassure your pet throughout the process.

Brush the outsides of the teeth only; Cats' and dogs' tongues effectively remove plaque off the insides. Place the bristles at a 45-degree angle where the teeth and gums meet, and brush in an oval pattern along the base of each tooth as well as between the teeth. Cover no more than three to four teeth at a time and use ten short back and forth motions before moving along.

While you're brushing watch for any signs of gum redness or tooth fractures. If you detect those or anything else that may be abnormal, inform your veterinarian as soon as possible.

Using a special pet toothbrush and special pet toothpaste is recommended but not a requirement. Don't use human toothpaste though; if they swallow it they may get an upset stomach. They'll like their own paste, however; it comes in flavors like chicken and tuna. Offer toothpaste on your finger initially so they get used to the consistency.

Then gently rub it on their teeth. Combining a toothbrush with toothpaste is the very last step and may take up to 3 months of very gradual progress to accomplish. Done right, brushing your pet's teeth regularly will add a new dimension to the bond you and your pet share.

February is National Pet Dental Health Month, a great reminder that dental health is about more than just teeth; it affects your pet's overall life expectancy! Diseases of the mouth are often painful and lead to infections of vital internal organs that are sometimes deadly. Regular dental care – at home and by your veterinarian – is important to ensure your pet the best possible quality of life – something she depends entirely on you to provide.

## PAW-FACT

**Only one in ten owners takes proper care of their pet's teeth.**

## PREVENTING Gum Disease

A person with bad breath may have difficulties getting a date for the prom. For your pet, however, it could mean a serious health problem, and the sooner you have it treated by your veterinarian, the sooner you and your pet can both smile proudly.

Periodontal disease is a progressive infection of the tissue surrounding the teeth. It starts out as a bacterial film called plaque. The bacteria in plaque lead to gingivitis, an inflammation of the gums, causing them to become red and swollen and bleed easily. Initially, plaque is soft and can be dislodged by brushing or chewing an appropriate hard object. Over time, plaque combines with the calcium in saliva to form a hard, rough substance called tartar or calculus, which allows plaque to accumulate even faster.

As plaque and calculus develop below the gum line, professional cleaning will be needed to help manage it. If the plaque and tartar buildup continues unchecked, infection can develop around the root of the tooth. This is called periodontitis. Eventually, the tissues surrounding the tooth are destroyed, the bony socket holding the tooth erodes and the tooth becomes loose.

It's best for dogs and cats to have their teeth brushed daily. Those of us who have attempted to do so, however, know this is easier said than done (see other story on this page).

There are special diets, treats and other aids that can accomplish part of what actual brushing does. And in the long run – as well as in your pet's mouth – something is better than nothing.

However, only brushing can clean plaque below the gum line. To prevent periodontal disease, there are no substitutes for daily brushing at home and professional treatment as recommended by your vet.

That's why it's so important for you to have your pet's teeth checked by your veterinarian at least twice a year, depending on their age, breed, diet and lifestyle. At these visits, your pet's dental needs will be assessed and the experts will help you put in place a dental care program that will avert painful periodontal disease before it starts.



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Hours

Mon-Thur 9am - 7pm

Fri 9am - 5pm

Sat 9am - 2pm

Feline and Canine Internal Medicine  
Surgery and Dental Services  
Puppy and Kitten  
Wellness Programs  
Canine Behavior Classes  
Senior Care  
Home Visits

### VETERINARY HOSPICE

Comfort care for you and your pet in your home  
or in our Private Comfort Rooms

### Puppy and Canine Behavior Classes

"Puppy Preschool" (for puppies up to 14 weeks old) and "Puppy Kindergarten" (for puppies approximately 4-6 months old) are six week courses offering all the tools you need to build a rewarding relationship with your dog for his or her lifetime. Tuition is only \$165!

Customized Classes for dogs 6 months old and up are also offered. Our instructor will admit your dog to one of these small group classes tailored to focus on your dog's most pressing training and behavior needs. Availability varies.

For dates of classes please call our office at  
(773)327.5024



## STAFF SPOTLIGHTS

**Introducing and welcome to the new additions to our staff.**

In the last year, the demand for our services has grown – the best compliment for our efforts we could wish for. THANK YOU!

In order to continue to provide the level of care we expect ourselves to deliver, we have added some bright-eyed, enthusiastic new faces to our team: patient care coordinators Pat Lee and Monica Page, and veterinary technician Jessica Bies. Stop by and introduce yourselves to these new members of the Compassionate Veterinary Care family.

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### Dental Promotion

**20%  
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