

Dental care and procedures

Studies have shown that only four out of 100 dental problems in pets are detected by their owners and brought to a veterinary surgery for this reason alone. The other 96% are detected by your vet at a health check or when your pet is taken to the vets for another problem.

It is thought that over 7.6 million cats and dogs in the UK are suffering from un-diagnosed toothache – by the age of three, seven out of 10 will have some dental disease.



Animals do not express pain in the same way that humans do and by the time it's obvious to you that your pet has a sore mouth the problem will probably have been there for some time.

Left untreated, in addition to the pain and discomfort your pet experiences from dental disease, there is the possibility of other complications with their kidneys, liver and heart, particularly in elderly pets that may have underlying problems already.

Dental disease is 100% preventable – all that is needed is good home dental care from the start. Once dental problems have developed, they are incurable, and all you can do is 'manage' them and reduce the discomfort.

Prevention is better than cure.

At Hillside we offer free dental check-ups with a nurse, so if you do have any concerns, please contact us for an appointment.

Brushing your dog's teeth

Good dental care means no more 'doggy breath', but more importantly can really make a long term difference to mouth problems as well as the overall health of your dog.

Positioning to allow easy brushing of your pet's teeth – first choose a time when you don't have to rush tooth brushing, otherwise you and your dog will become stressed and he/she will be less co-operative. Ask your dog to sit, hold the muzzle shut with your thumb over the top of the nose with fingers underneath. Keeping the mouth shut, gently lift the lip side to show the teeth.



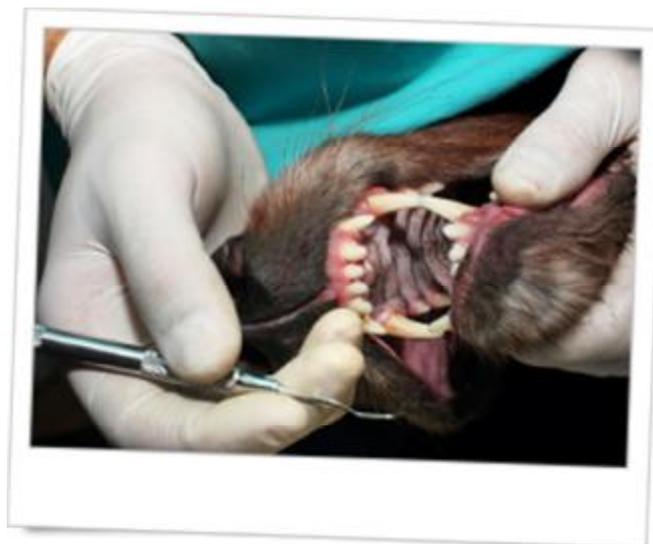
Preparing the brush for battle – apply a small amount of Virbac Enzymatic pet toothpaste to the brush. It's not advisable to use human toothpaste for a number of reasons:

- Dogs don't tend to like frothy toothpaste
- Unless your dog is well trained to rinse and spit, the toothpaste will be swallowed, which over time can cause tummy problems
- The minty flavour of human toothpastes can be 'vindaloo curry' like to some dogs! They much prefer a malt or poultry flavour of their own toothpaste.

More information on brushing your dog's teeth can be found on our specific 'Brushing y our dog's teeth guidance sheet.

A dental procedure is required

Dental work in pets is always carried out under **general anaesthetic**. At Hillside Veterinary Centre we use modern anaesthetic agents in a safe combination, as well as ensuring that your pet remains as pain free as possible. If we are concerned about your pet's general health we may recommend a blood test and/or a 'drip' (intravenous fluids) during the operation to make the procedure as safe as possible. We tend to use intravenous fluids routinely in all our elderly patients as it is well proven to improve anaesthetic safety and recovery rates. All patients will receive a full pre-operative health check after they have been admitted for the day and before an anaesthetic is given.



At Hillside any dental surgery or extractions is carried out by one of our vets using modern dental equipment and techniques, much as you would see at your own dentist. We also have a dental specific X-ray machine in-house allowing us to take detailed pictures of your pet's teeth. Our vets have all attended advanced study courses in dentistry to ensure they are using the most up-to-date techniques and treatments.

Following the procedure, your pet will be discharged by one of our nurses later the same day. They will discuss all aspects of the dental work undertaken, explain any medication that your pet has been given and if there has been an extraction will show you a dental chart of your pet's mouth illustrating what the problems were and what work has been undertaken. Our clients find this particularly helpful as many pets won't let you the owner have a look for yourself! We also send your pet home with a complimentary tin of soft food for that evening which they seem to rather enjoy.

The following week you will receive a free follow-up appointment – this will enable us to check that the mouth is healing properly and you may ask any further questions. The appointment will also include advice on what you, the owner, can do to prevent further dental disease. This includes tooth-brushing, special dental diets and appropriate chews/toys etc.

Some Pet Insurance companies will cover for work that is associated with dental problems/disease; it's always worth contacting your insurance company to discuss this with them before any treatment is given. There will, however, be an excess that you will be required to pay.

Remember, if you have any concerns about your pet's teeth or gums, it is always better to book an appointment and have them checked out rather than just leave it – **prevention is better than cure.**

Disclaimer: Hillside Vets' website is intended to be used only as a guide and information resource, not as an alternative to a veterinary consultation and advice. Nothing contained in this website should be construed as medical advice or diagnosis. For specific healthcare advice please discuss the particular symptoms and circumstances of your pet with your vet.