

Looking after your cat's teeth



In association with
BVDA
British Veterinary Dental Association



Happy cats have healthy mouths...

Part of being healthy is having a healthy mouth. Good teeth and gums are important for more than just eating, for example cats also use their mouth to groom their coat, to carry things, to catch, to hold and to play.

It can be very hard for owners to spot that their cat has dental problems, mainly because even when cats have a sore mouth, they are incredibly good at not showing it and can appear to eat normally.

Dental diseases can affect all breeds of cats but is particularly common in crossbreeds, Bengal, Siamese, Maine Coon, British Shorthair and Persian breeds.*



Checking your cat's mouth

It is important that you check your cat's mouth regularly. Some cats are more tolerant than others when it comes to having their face handled. Do not force your cat and if you can't manage to get a proper look then leave it to a veterinary professional.



How to look at your cat's mouth: – holding the cat's head still, very gently separate the lips

Checking your cat's mouth

Your vet will check your cat's mouth at their annual health check when they have their vaccinations.

You can always request an extra check-up from your vet or vet nurse at any time if you have concerns.

Signs to look out for are;

- Bad breath (halitosis)
- Red gums (gingivitis)
 - increased redness where the gum meets a tooth
- Any bleeding when your cat eats or if the gums are touched
- Loose teeth
- Behavioural changes
 - less active or less inclined to play
- Loss of part of the tooth surface
- Areas of your cat's gums that appear to be enlarged

What causes gum disease?

Gum disease is caused by dental plaque. Dental plaque is a bacteria laden paste that forms naturally on the teeth. It is tooth coloured and so it is not easy to see. If plaque remains in place for a few days it can become harmful.

The first thing plaque causes is inflammation of the gum tissue. This inflammation is called 'Gingivitis' and is seen as a thin red line where the gum meets the tooth. When dental plaque is not removed from the tooth, it hardens into 'Tartar'. Tartar is a mineral deposit on the tooth which is firmly attached.

Tartar (also called Calculus) aids further build-up of plaque by providing a rough surface for plaque to latch on to. If the gum inflammation (gingivitis) is not stopped by adequate daily plaque removal then it will progress to gum disease.



What can be done about gum disease?

We all brush our own teeth every day to remove the plaque build-up and help prevent gum disease.

Cats do not appreciate how important tooth-brushing is and most are not very co-operative! However some cats will tolerate it so it's worth giving it a try!



Healthy cat mouth

What can be done about gum disease?

The most important thing to help reduce the risk of gum disease is to establish a daily home-care regime for cleaning your cat's teeth.

This can include:

- Tooth-brushing (even the smallest amount is worthwhile) using a toothbrush and toothpaste that has been designed specifically for cats
- Dental treats and specific dental diets designed especially for cats – to maximise the scraping effect as the cat crunches food



© image courtesy of Lisa Miliella

Gingivitis with slight tartar build up

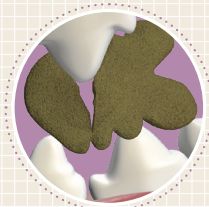
Helping to encourage good oral care in cats

The tiny grooves on **Whiskas® Dentabites** gently clean the tooth surface as your cat's teeth contact the crunchy treats.



Increasing efficacy by decreasing density.

The special texture of our feline treats makes them less likely to shatter as your cat's teeth sink in, giving more opportunity for mechanical cleaning action.



Whiskas® Dentabites have the VOHC seal of approval as they prevent tartar build up



The Veterinary Oral Health Council (VOHC) is recognised worldwide as the leading independent pet dental review board. Board-certified veterinary dentists and dental scientists at the VOHC objectively review research and award the seal only to products that meet their high standards.

