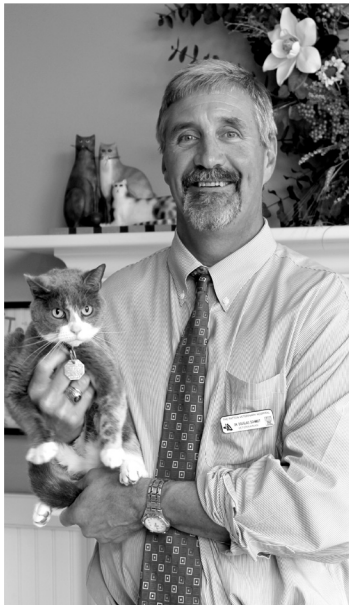


ASK OUR VET, DR. SCHMIDT



Dental Care by Dr. Kathleen Spencer

Dental disease is one of the most common diseases in companion animals. According to the American Veterinary Dental Society, 80% of dogs and 70% of cats suffer from dental disease by the age of three! Surprisingly, dog and cat teeth are not all that different from human teeth. There is an outer layer of enamel covering an inner pulp which consists of blood vessels and nerves. Since they are similar, dog and cat teeth require the same maintenance as our teeth.

It is proven that maintaining dental health in your pets will extend their life anywhere from two to five years. Maintaining dental health is easy. It requires daily brushing with a tooth paste approved for pet use. Companion animal toothpaste differs from human toothpaste in that it does not contain fluoride, which is not safe for pets to ingest. There are several different brush types and sizes available. Ideally, brushing would be introduced to pets at an early age, however, it is possible to introduce brushing to adult pets as well. The key is starting slowly by introducing the pet to the flavored tooth paste that they will likely enjoy. Then take your finger and practice rubbing the toothpaste on the teeth.

Next introduce a toothbrush. The more you practice the easier it will be. If brushing is not possible (most pets are more amiable than you think, you just have to give them the chance) you can try other dental care

products. There are dental rinses which help break down plaque and tartar. There are also products which can be mixed in the drinking water, or dental chews. However, just like with our teeth, brushing is FAR superior to any other products mentioned.

Despite any of the above listed dental maintenance plans, most pets will still require annual professional dental cleanings with your veterinarian once they are above the age of three. If you suspect that your pet is suffering from dental disease, please discuss with your veterinarian.



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