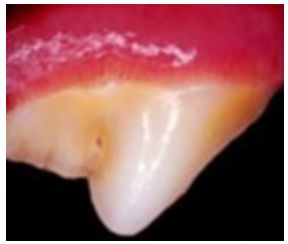
Stages of Periodontal Disease

Stage 1 - Mild Calculus (Catch it Early)

- The margin of attached gum is inflamed and swollen.
- Plaque covers the teeth.
- A dental cleaning is recommended to remove plaque build up to avoid developing calculus.



Stage 2 - Moderate Calculus

- The entire gum is inflamed and swollen.
- The mouth is painful and odor is evident.
- A dental cleaning to remove the calculus is needed.



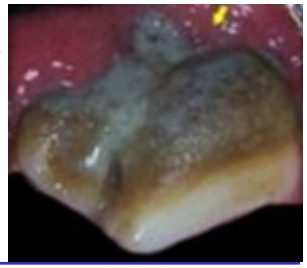
Stage 3 - Severe Calculus and Gingivitis

- The gums appear deep red and bleed easily. Infection and heavy calculus buildup have caused significant irritation and tissue damage.
- This stage marks the beginning of serious gum damage and increased risk to overall health.
- A dental is needed immediately to **prevent further** disease progression and help restore gum health.



Stage 4 - Periodontal Disease

- Chronic inflammation is destroying the gums, teeth and bone.
- Bacteria are spreading through the body by the blood stream and can damage the kidneys, liver and heart.
- A dental is needed **immediately!**





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Dental Healthcare Basics



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ANIMAL CARE HOSPITAL

1006 Old Spartanburg Road
Hendersonville, NC

Phone: (828) 692-7201

Veterinary Dentistry?

Just as humans require regular dental care, so do our pets.

Imagine the consequences of neglecting your own oral hygiene for months. Our veterinarians frequently encounter tartar buildup, periodontal diseases, and tooth damage in pets. **They are the most common and most preventable medical condition we see.** These conditions cause significant pain, oral infections, and compromise overall health. Furthermore, studies demonstrate that bacterial infections originating from affected gums can spread through the bloodstream, potentially leading to serious conditions like liver, kidney, and heart disease.

The good news... Proper dental care adds an average of two years to your pet's life.

Professional dental cleanings are considered the **gold standard** for maintaining your pet's oral health. By age 3, more than 80% of dogs and 70% of cats show signs of dental disease, much of it hidden below the gumline where it cannot be seen at home. Routine dental care helps prevent pain, infection, tooth loss, and progression of periodontal disease **before it becomes severe.**



A certified technician uses an ultrasonic scaler to clean a dog's teeth under anesthesia.

Clinical studies show proper dental care adds an average of two years to a dog or cat's life.



An adult canine tooth **before** cleaning. Bright red at the gum line indicates periodontal disease.



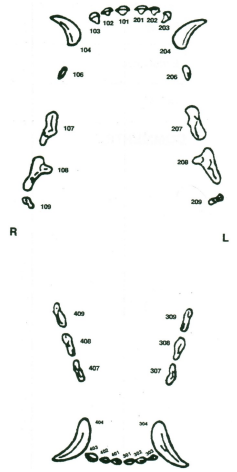
The same tooth **after** dental cleaning. Without the tartar, the gum will have a chance to heal.



In this severe case of periodontal disease, the tartar is composed of salivary mineralization and food particles. Bacteria grows quickly in this environment and reaches the bloodstream through the inflamed gum line. This condition causes pain and a general decline in the pet's general health. This bacteria surge can cause kidney, liver, and heart disease.

What To Watch For:

- Difficulty eating or chewing
- Foul breath odor
- Changes in chewing habits
- Subdued behavior
- Red or inflamed gums
- Excessive drooling
- Tartar buildup on the teeth
- Pawing at the mouth or face
- Blood-tinged saliva



Prevention Is Key

Maintaining your pet's oral health is best accomplished through a combination of routine professional dental cleanings and consistent at-home care. Plaque forms on the teeth daily and, if not removed, can harden into tartar and contribute to periodontal disease. Consistent at-home care, particularly daily tooth brushing, is the most effective method for controlling plaque accumulation. VOHC-approved dental diets, treats, and chews may also support home dental care by helping reduce plaque and tartar formation. Routine professional dental cleanings are equally important, as they remove plaque and tartar above and below the gumline that cannot be addressed at home, helping to prevent pain, infection, and tooth loss.

About the procedure:

Our doctor will perform a pre-anesthesia exam to look for any indication that anesthesia may be unsafe for your pet. All anesthesia patients have blood work to further identify any potential problems and help select the safest anesthesia possible. After anesthetic induction, a tracheal breathing tube is placed. This tube constantly administers oxygen mixed with anesthetic gas. It also protects your pet from inhaling of bacteria laden plaque during the procedure.



A circulating warm-water blanket is used to help maintain your pet's optimal body temperature. Full-mouth dental radiographs (X-rays) are taken for every patient to evaluate the teeth and bone below the gumline, where many dental problems cannot be seen on a routine exam. A thorough oral examination is then performed, and the doctor determines if any teeth require special treatment or extraction; every effort is made to preserve teeth whenever possible. The teeth are then ultrasonically cleaned using the same technology used in human dentistry, followed by polishing to remove microscopic scratches that can promote tartar re-formation. A final oral examination is performed, and your pet is monitored closely during recovery from anesthesia. The procedure typically takes 35–45 minutes.

Although we perform hundreds of dental cleanings each year, we never consider any anesthesia procedure as routine. During the cleaning your pet will be constantly monitored by the technician and a computer system which continually reads your pet's heartbeat and respiration rates, sounding an alert if there are any abnormal variations. This allows us to prioritize your pet's safety during dental cleanings.