

## Dental Treatment for your pet

Your pet has been diagnosed as suffering from dental disease. There are many different problems that can develop in the mouth, and we will explain to you anything specific to your own pet. However, the commonest problem relates to a buildup of food residues and minerals on the teeth that lead to an accumulation of soft tartar and hard calculus, causing inflammation and then infection of the gums and tooth roots. This can be broadly divided into four stages, with different treatment approaches to each:

### **1. Early or minimal dental disease**

Preventative care with a healthy diet, dental chews and regular tooth brushing can help to keep teeth healthy, and may deal with early gum disease. We advise the feeding of Hills t/d prescription diet to any cats and dogs with early dental disease, as its special fibrous structure acts rather like a toothbrush on the chewing teeth, and it has no excess content of the minerals that cause calculus. T/d is a complete, premium quality food and not just a treat.

### **2. Inflammation**

Once the gums become significantly inflamed, it is necessary to de-scale and polish the teeth under a light general anaesthetic. Our nursing staff can then offer advice on follow-up dental care.

### **3. Gum recession and infection**

Once pockets begin to form as the gums recede, and infection starts to invade the gums, it is usually necessary to combine de-scaling with a course of medical treatment such as antibiotics.

### **4. Progression of infection**

As the infection progresses, teeth will begin to loosen, and abscesses may form. Badly affected teeth will need to be extracted, and others may have irreversible damage that leads to their extraction at a later date.

### **Neck lesions**

Cats in particular are also very prone to holes developing in the enamel of the tooth near the gum, which leaves the sensitive pulp of the tooth exposed and will be very painful if any pressure is applied to this area. These “neck lesions” are very common and are not always associated with the four progressive categories described above as they can be spontaneous lesions appearing on otherwise healthy mouths.

Whilst we are all reluctant to put our pets through elective procedures that are not urgently necessary, dental disease is a major cause of discomfort and ill health in both dogs and

cats. Leaving the disease problem untreated means that secondary complications such as abscesses and even blood poisoning can result, and the longer the inflammation and infection is left, the more advanced the treatment has to become.

The anaesthetics that we use in our clinic are safe and modern, and the risks are minimal. We usually advise that animals undergoing such procedures have a blood profile checked on the morning of their admission, so that we can identify any potential underlying disease problems and adjust our approach accordingly. Intravenous fluid therapy is routinely given as your pet will have been fasted prior to the procedure, this ensures they are fully hydrated, maintain their blood pressure and recover as swiftly as possible from the anaesthetic.

We are happy to discuss the proposed treatment with you further should you have any queries.