



Snippets

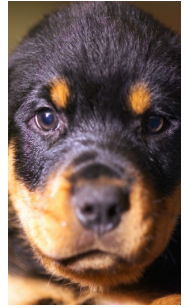
Small animal newsletter

Issue 5

Winter 2007

Happy Families

Here is a story to brighten your day. Recently a litter of unwanted puppies was brought to the clinic. The very same day, a whelping bitch whose puppies all turned out to be dead, also arrived. No prizes for guessing what happened next! We matched up the two families and happily both mother and puppies are doing well. The story will be guaranteed a happy ending if we can find good homes for all involved at the beginning of July. The puppies are cross bred, all different colours but all very nicely marked. We have two males and three females. The nurse mum is a medium sized black pig dog with a lovely placid nature, great with kids but absolutely no good with cats. If you would like to help us give this story a fairytale ending, the family is at the clinic every Monday so call the clinic to arrange a viewing.



This newsletter is devoted entirely to dental matters. Research shows that at around the age of two, 80% of dogs and 70% of cats have some sign of dental disease. Factors that can contribute to a pet developing dental problems include:

POOR ORAL HYGIENE. Without proper preventative care, plaque and tartar can accumulate and lead to gingivitis (inflamed gums) and periodontal disease.

BREED Overcrowded or misaligned teeth are more often a problem for smaller breeds of dogs and can encourage periodontal disease.

FOOD Feeding your pet moist sticky foods like canned, sachet or roll-type meat can lead to a more rapid accumulation of plaque.

AGE Dental disease occurs more frequently as pets get older.

At Town and Country Vets we take dental health very seriously in all species. Bacteria associated with dental disease can enter a pet's blood stream and spread to the vital organs such as heart, liver or kidneys.

Read on for more information on this important health issue and how to prevent it happening to your pet.

Bad Breath - Why?

Bad breath is not normal - it may be a sign of dental disease.

Dental Disease (periodontal disease) is progressive, starting with plaque accumulation. Plaque is a layer of bacteria, salivary proteins and food debris which forms on the surface of the teeth. When plaque builds up it hardens and forms tartar which causes painful irritation of the gums, or gingivitis. At this stage, the disease can be reversed by a professional dental cleaning procedure at the clinic. If the build up is allowed to continue, deepening pockets containing plaque and tartar form between the teeth & gums. Bacteria then attack the tissues and bone that hold the teeth in place - unnecessary pain and tooth loss.

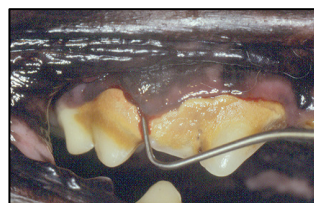
Despite everyday brushing, flossing and mouthwashing we still require annual visits to our dentist for scaling and polishing. It is hardly surprising that dental disease can occur rapidly in our pets that don't benefit from a similar level of dental home care.

Just as in people the economic cost of allowing dental disease to progress can be significant. Regular visits to our dentist for professional dental cleaning greatly reduce the likelihood that expensive costly treatments, such as root canals and extractions, will be required.

What do your pets teeth look like?



Healthy



Unhealthy

Continued from Page 1.

Our pets rely on us to provide them with good oral health care. Elements in their diet that help clean teeth (dry food, chews etc) regular teeth brushing (this is not always easy!) and most importantly, professional dental cleaning by our vets are essential. A Pet Health Check is the ideal time for our vets to check your pet's oral health. Remember – One year in your life is equivalent to seven+ years in your pets life. A lot can happen in your mouth in seven years.

If your pet has bad breath or a yellowish-brown crust on their teeth, if they paw at their mouth, have difficulty eating, or drool often, then contact us now or make an appointment for their Pet Health Check and Professional Dental Cleaning.

Dental Exercise

Dental exercise is one of the key ways you can prevent plaque and tartar build up. This means giving your pet's teeth something crunchy or firm to bite through rather than soft, mushy pet foods. Domestic cats and dogs have teeth no different to their wild cousins like wolves and lions. Dental disease is extremely rare in wild animals because their diet consists of bone, fur and feather through which their teeth have to grind and gnaw.

Softer pet foods of the canned variety or pet rolls do not "exercise" the teeth well enough and so plaque can build up. We recommend complete biscuit diets for cats and dogs. They come in a wide variety of flavours for all ages and stages of life and our staff can advise you on which one would be best for your pet.

An over-sized bone is another great way to scrape and clean teeth while giving your dog a treat. Chewing the soft meaty bits off the bone is what cleans the teeth. Please note, the bone itself is not for eating and needs to be thrown away once all the soft tissue is removed.

Special dental chews prevent the build-up of bacteria and daily brushing will provide excellent at home care. Special pet toothpastes and brushes are available in yummy flavors like poultry and malt. Brushes are designed to reach all the surfaces of your pet's teeth and soft bristles will not irritate the gums. Just a few minutes a day are all it takes. Ask our staff for any of these products.

Vaccine To Help Dental Disease

Dog's teeth double as their hands, help protect their teeth.

Now there's PERIOVAC® - a new approach to help protect dogs teeth.



Playing, fetching, dragging, carrying... all the things they love doing.

Now imagine your dog with severe periodontal (dental) disease. Most of us know the agony of sore gums or tooth ache. So to a degree, we know how dogs feel when they experience the pain of periodontal disease.

Periodontal disease is a painful and progressive inflammatory condition involving bacteria attacking the gums, ligament and bony tissues which surround and support teeth.

The good news is that the initial stage, gingivitis is reversible. Left untreated however, gingivitis progresses to severe periodontal disease leading to bone and tooth loss.

As in people, no one thing is enough to prevent periodontal disease in your dog. A combination of home care and veterinary care is needed.

Now there is an innovative vaccine, PERIOVAC, to help prevent the destruction caused by severe periodontal disease.

In order to protect your dog's teeth, it is essential that you provide them with regular home and veterinary care.

Options Include:

1. Regular Pet Health Checks
2. Vaccination with PERIOVAC
3. Professional Dental Cleaning (to remove plaque and calculus)
4. Dental Diets, chews and bones.
5. Toothbrushing

Our Vets will recommend a suitable dental programme that best suits the needs for your dog.