



HILL'S PET NUTRITION AUSTRALIA GUIDE TO PET DENTAL HEALTH

Dental health is a critical yet often overlooked aspect of pet care, and if neglected it can have significant implications for our furry friends' overall health and wellbeing and should be considered within a preventative care routine.

Hill's Pet Nutrition Australia is aiming to raise awareness surrounding the importance of pet dental care with tips & advice from their Professional Consulting Veterinarian Dr. Jessica Mills around how pet parents can better recognise the signs of dental disease and how to maintain proper oral hygiene.

Pet Dental Health Statistics

- At least 70% of pets develop dental issues by 2 years old.
- Poor dental hygiene can lead to periodontal disease, which is one of the most common clinical conditions in adult dogs

Key Signs & Symptoms of Dental Disease

Signs your pet could be suffering from dental troubles include:

- **Bad breath (halitosis):** may be the first sign of a problem with your pet's oral health and occurs when bacteria from food gets stuck in your dog's mouth.
- **Yellow or brown crust on teeth:** the accumulation of bacteria, food debris, and saliva on teeth leads to plaque formation. This plaque adheres to tooth surfaces both above and below the gum line. If left unchecked, it hardens into a substance called tartar.
- **Bleeding gums:** especially during eating or tooth brushing can indicate gum inflammation or periodontal disease.
- **Changes in chewing habits:** Sudden changes in how your pet eats, such as favouring one side of the mouth, may indicate dental pain or discomfort.
- **Tooth loss:** when this occurs in adult pets it is often a sign of advanced dental disease and requires immediate veterinary attention.
- **Excessive drooling:** An increase in drooling beyond what's normal for your pet could suggest oral discomfort or infection.
- **Ulcers on the gums:** this can be a sign of dental disease.

If you notice any changes in your dog or cat's mouth, such as lumps, discoloration, swelling, sores, or a change in smell, contact your vet immediately.

Common Causes of Dental Disease

Dental issues are more likely to occur in certain types of dogs and both age and breed are both common factors:

- **Age** - dental issues are more common in older pets.
- **Breed** - small dogs, especially those with a flat face or short nose, are more likely to have overcrowded or misaligned teeth that are difficult to keep clean and more prone to dental issues.
- **Food** - some foods can increase your pet's risk of dental issues, so ask your veterinarian for a nutritional recommendation.

Dr Jessica Mills, Professional Consulting Veterinarian at Hill's Pet Nutrition Australia said:

"A healthy mouth is fundamental to the overall health and quality of life of both our dogs and cats. Dental health is related to a chain of reactions that affect overall health. When plaque builds up on your pets' teeth, the bacteria can lead to gum inflammation, allowing bacteria to enter the bloodstream and potentially impact vital organs such as the heart, liver and kidney."

"We recommend a multi-faceted approach to dental care. Regular assessment and teeth cleaning by your veterinarian is important, happening under general anaesthetic to properly check the entire mouth and thoroughly clean teeth, including under the gum line. At home, a daily dental care regime is crucial. Feeding specially formulated dental foods can help clean your pet's teeth whilst they eat, providing precisely balanced nutrition to improve dental health."

Teeth Brushing Process - How to Care for Your Pets Oral Hygiene at Home

A happy and healthy mouth starts with creating healthy habits:

Step 1: Get your dog or cat used to the idea of having their teeth brushed. Avoid over-restraining them and keep brushing sessions short and positive. Gently massage their gums with your finger or a cotton swab.

Step 2: Use a toothbrush designed especially for dogs and cats; they are smaller than a human toothbrush and have softer bristles. Toothbrushes that you can wear over your finger are also available.

Step 3: Use toothpaste designed for dogs and cats; using your own toothpaste can cause distress and upset your pets stomach.

Step 4: If your pet already has signs of dental disease, brushing their teeth might be uncomfortable. Visit your vet for a quick check-up before you begin brushing.

Our pets rely on us for all aspects of their health, including dental care. It's our responsibility to ensure they receive the attention and care they need for optimal oral health and overall wellbeing.

Hill's Pet Nutrition Australia leads in science-based pet nutrition, transforming lives through quality ingredients and innovative formulas. Our commitment to animal welfare has helped 12 million shelter pets find homes globally. We prioritise sustainability and achieving zero waste in our manufacturing. For further press release inquiries email: damien.johns@wmglobal.com