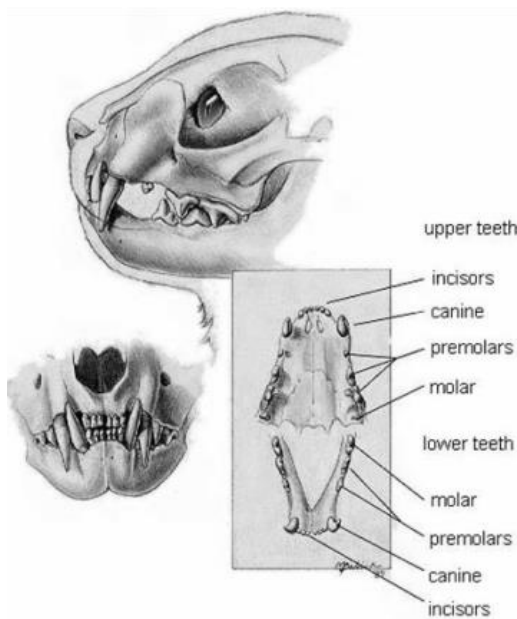


## Post-Op Dentistry Handout

Thank you for choosing Avonhead Vets to complete a dental procedure your beloved cat – we can assure you, we have taken every precaution to ensure they have received the best care and treatment, while they have been with us today 😊.



Periodontal disease starts when plaque (a bacterial film) coats the tooth. Plaque hardens (calcifies) into tartar, a thick yellow or brown layer on the teeth. Tartar can irritate the gums, creating an environment where bacteria thrive. As the disease progresses, the gums become tender, red, and swollen and the bacteria continue to multiply. Eventually, the inflamed gums pull away from the teeth, creating pockets that trap more bacteria and food particles. The gums bleed, the roots of the teeth may become exposed, teeth may become loose, and your cat may feel pain when eating. If the bacteria enter the bloodstream, they can create problems for organs such as the heart, liver, and kidneys.

### What happens during the dental procedure?

During a dental cleaning, plaque and tartar are removed from a cat's teeth and the health of the entire mouth (tongue, gums, lips, and teeth) is assessed. A thorough dental cleaning can be accomplished only while the cat is under general anaesthesia. Anaesthesia keeps your cat free of pain during the dental procedure and allows us to fully inspect the teeth and remove tartar from under the gums.

*A dental procedure with us may include and not limited to:* removal of visible plaque and tartar from the teeth, elimination of plaque and tartar from under the gum line, probing of dental sockets to assess dental disease, polishing to smooth enamel scratches that may harbour bacteria, dental radiographs (x-rays) to evaluate problems below the gum line, removal or repair of fractured or infected teeth and inspection of the lips, tongue, and entire mouth for growths, wounds, or other problems.

Periodontal disease is not reversible, but diligent at-home dental care can help slow down the progression.

### What can you do to keep your cat's teeth clean?

Once a dental cleaning has been performed, you can take a few steps at home to keep your cat's teeth clean and lengthen the intervals between dental cleanings:

- Just as in people, **daily brushing** can help remove food particles from between your pet's teeth. You can use a child's toothbrush or purchase a finger brush from us. Human toothpastes should be avoided because they contain ingredients that should not be swallowed by your pet. Please discuss products we have available with our friendly staff.

"We understand the special role your pets play in your family. It is our aim to preserve that relationship by providing the best in veterinary medicine, delivered with compassion, integrity and good old-fashioned care."

- Several **dental diets and treats** can also help keep plaque and tartar to a minimum. The diets tend to have larger kibbles to provide abrasive action against the tooth surface when chewed, or they may contain ingredients that help prevent tartar mineralization. We have provided samples of dental diets (Hills & Royal Canin) and dental chews.
- **MaxiGuard OraZn** is designed for cats as it's tasteless. The unique zinc formulation is very effective in helping reduction in gingival (gum) inflammation, reducing the disposition of plaque and neutralising offensive mouth odours. A great product for maintaining oral health after a dental procedure. Mention this handout to receive a 10% discount off a MaxiGard OraZn product.

### Tips & Tricks for Teeth Brushing

*One of the best ways to help prevent periodontal disease is to brush your cat's teeth daily, or at least multiple times a week.*

#### What You'll Need:

- Baby toothbrush or pet toothbrush that is an appropriate size for your cat
- Pet toothpaste
- Treat or other reward your cat really likes

*Note: Do not use toothpaste for people or baking soda to brush your dog's teeth. Human toothpaste is made with ingredients that can cause stomach upset if swallowed (e.g., detergents, fluoride). Cat toothpaste comes in different flavours (e.g., poultry, malt). The more your dog likes the toothpaste, the easier it will be to train him or her to accept brushing.*

Toothbrushing should be a bonding experience that is constantly reinforced with praise and rewards. Be very patient — teaching your cat to accept toothbrushing may take weeks. Make toothbrushing enjoyable for your cat by rewarding him or her immediately after each session.

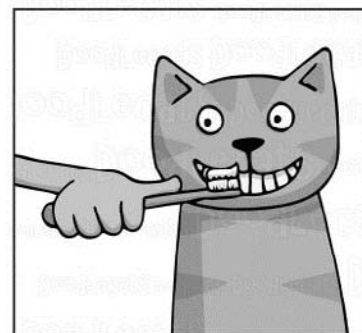
You only need to brush the outside of your cat's teeth — the side facing the cheek. Only do as much at a time as your cat allows. You may not be able to do the whole mouth at first.

If you are ever worried about being bitten, stop. Ask us about how best to care for your cat's teeth. Start by letting your cat get used to the toothbrush and toothpaste. Put them out and let your cat sniff them. You can let your cat taste the toothpaste to see if they like it.

Also, get your cat used to you touching his or her mouth. Lift his or her lips, and slowly and gently rub your cat's teeth and gums with your finger. When your cat is comfortable with you touching their mouth and is familiar with the toothbrush and toothpaste, gradually switch to putting the toothpaste on your finger, and then to putting the toothpaste on the toothbrush.

At first, let your cat lick the paste off the brush to get used to having the brush in his or her mouth. If your cat won't tolerate a toothbrush, a small piece of washcloth can be used. Place a small amount of toothpaste on the washcloth and rub it over the outside surfaces of your cat's teeth.

Brush your cat's teeth along the gum line. Work quickly—you don't need to scrub. Work up to at least 30 seconds of brushing for each side of the mouth every other day. If you notice any problems as you brush, like red or bleeding gums or bad breath, please contact us. The earlier problems are found, the easier they may be to treat.



**We hope they have a smooth recovery and get well soon!**

WARMEST WISHES,  
THE TEAM AT AVONHEAD VETERINARY CLINIC

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