

This is a step by step guide to help you assess if your pet might have dental disease.

All of the steps below focus on different signs that may indicate that your pet could be suffering from dental disease.

Firstly, watch your pet:

- 1) Observe your pet's approach to their food. Are they less keen than they have been in the past? Do they prefer soft vs hard food?**

Dental disease can be very sore, just like a toothache for a human, so sometimes you may see a change in their eating habits.

- 2) When your pet eats, do they chew mainly on one side versus another? Do they drop food when they are chewing?**

They may have a toothache on one side of their mouth or their mouth may be sore.

- 3) Does your pet dislike having their face touched? Particularly their mouth?**

This can be a sign that they are in pain.

- 4) Does your pet have smelly breath?**

Bacteria build up in the mouth with dental disease, leading to strong, bad smelling breath.

Now time for an at-home examination of your pet's mouth!

- 1) Have a friend or family member help you by holding onto your dog or cat so you can assess their teeth. Be sure to reassure your pet and have treats handy. If your pet growls or finds this too scary, bring them in for us to assess instead.

- 2) Gently lift your pet's lips until you can see their teeth. There is no need to open your pet's jaws, and they usually don't like it if you try!



- 3) Look closely at their gums. Gums are usually a nice rosy pink colour and they should be smooth in texture. Sometimes they have black gums or black spots which is fine. Are your pet's gums red around their teeth? Bumpy? Sore to the touch? These could all be signs of gingivitis or gum disease.



- 4) Are your pet's gums receding? You can tell by checking to see if the root of the tooth is exposed. This is often seen as a hole being visible in between the roots of the bigger teeth.
- 5) Look carefully at the teeth. Tartar, one of the components of gum disease, is yellow to grey in colour and looks a bit like a hard coating on a sweetie. It is generally seen along the top of each tooth. Any tartar is abnormal and can be painful as well as contributing to rotting of the teeth.



- 6) Are any of the teeth discoloured?
- 7) Are any of your pet's teeth loose? Particularly look at the little ones in the front of the mouth in between the big canines. Loose teeth are a sign that the teeth are dying and the gum may be affected as well.

If you think your pet has any of these signs, then please book an appointment with one of our vets so that we can decide on the best treatment plan.

If you are not sure or your pet will not allow you to look closely then during March 2017 we are offering free dental checks with our nurse as part of our Dental Health Awareness Month.

Please call us on 0141 959 6100 and bring your pet down and we can take a look and let you know how their dental health is and give you any advice you may need on preventative care.



**Normal
Healthy
Teeth**

