

What every Feline Family should know:

# Teeth cleaning is essential to preventing dental disease



About 85% of adult cats have some form of periodontal disease ranging from mild gingivitis to painful tooth abscesses and resorptive lesions (the feline version of a “cavity”). Periodontal disease is caused by a buildup of tartar and plaque, a bacteria –laden film that coats your cat’s teeth and produces enzymes that break down gum tissue and cause inflammation. Dental disease is painful and, if left untreated, can lead to serious illnesses including liver disease, kidney failure and heart damage.

Typically, this build-up of tartar and plaque is not easily visible at home so you may not know that your cat is uncomfortable. All wellness exams at The Cat Practice include an examination of your cat’s teeth and mouth. If detected, the only way to remove tartar and plaque is with a dental cleaning. Often times, cat families say that their cat is acting more like themselves after a dental cleaning since they didn’t realize their cat was in pain or not feeling well.

## What is dental cleaning?

Dental cleaning is a procedure in which a cat’s teeth are thoroughly examined, x-rays are taken and tartar and plaque are removed. Since the procedure requires anesthesia, your cat must have nothing to eat the morning of the procedure. Pre-anesthetic blood work is also done to make sure that your kitty is healthy prior to anesthesia. Cats are carefully monitored during the procedure. Usually the patient goes home the same day.

## What does the exam involve?

During a dental cleaning, your veterinarian will conduct a thorough exam of your cat’s teeth and gums that includes:

- Assessment of the oral cavity
- Evaluation of each tooth
- X-rays of the roots
- Examination of occlusion -- the way in which the teeth come together
- Removal of plaque and tartar and tooth polishing

During the exam, your veterinarian will be checking for:

- Gingivitis and periodontal disease
- Resorptive lesions\* (cat “cavities”)
- Broken or extra teeth
- Stomatitis (severe oral cavity inflammation)
- Crooked teeth
- Mouth cancer
- Abscesses

\*Resorptive lesions are common and cause resorption of the tooth beginning at the root. These lesions are not preventable and not curable, so the teeth that show signs of resorption typically require extraction.

## What can you do at home?

Home dental care helps maintain healthy teeth and prolong periods between dental cleanings. Regularly brush your cat’s teeth, daily if possible, with feline toothpaste, use oral gels and feed your cat treats that reduce tartar build up such as Greenies.

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**NOTE:** Our “Feline Family” series covers many important topics to help your feline family members live longer, better and healthier lives. For other topics, or more information, go to [www.thecatpracticepc.com](http://www.thecatpracticepc.com) or call us at 248-540-3390.