

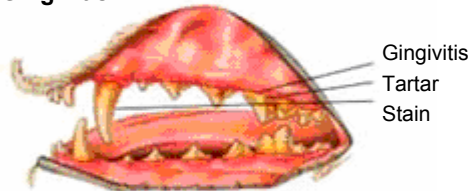
## Normal Dental Examination



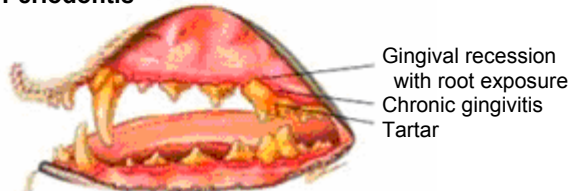
## Plaque



## Gingivitis



## Periodontitis



## Periodontal Disease

### Diagnostic Plan

History  
Physical examination  
Oral examination

### Therapeutic Plan

Tooth scaling above and below the gumline  
Tooth polishing  
Extraction  
Surgery  
Antibacterials  
Tooth brushing

### Nutritional Plan

Postsurgery or extractions, nutrition with characteristics that support tissue repair. A soft food may minimize post-procedural discomfort. Long term, a food with formulation and texture that slows the accumulation of plaque and tartar.

## Periodontal Disease

Your pet has periodontal disease. Periodontal disease is an inflammation of the tissues that support the teeth. It is the primary cause for early tooth loss. Periodontal disease is treated by tooth scaling to remove plaque and calculus, surgery, tooth extraction, and daily removal of plaque at home. This client education sheet will help you learn more about periodontal disease and will review your veterinarian's instructions for your pet's care at home, as well as follow-up with the veterinary health care team.

## What You Should Know About Periodontal Disease

Plaque is a substance containing bacteria, salivary secretions, and cells. Plaque accumulates on the tooth surfaces where it causes periodontal disease. Periodontal disease is the progressive inflammation and death of structures that support the teeth, including the gums, cementum, periodontal ligaments, and bone. This results in tooth loss. Calculus (mineral deposits secreted by the salivary glands) worsens plaque deposits on the teeth and periodontal disease.

Periodontal disease is very common. More than 80% of dogs six years old and older and 60% of cats have some degree of periodontal disease. Although periodontal disease is found more frequently in older pets, its effects start in younger animals. Inflammation of the gums (gingivitis) often develops by the time a pet is one or two years old and progresses to irreversible changes by the time the pet is four to six years old.

## Diagnosis

Your veterinarian will often see signs of periodontal disease when he or she inspects your pet's mouth and evaluates the pockets formed by soft tissues around the teeth. X-rays, blood tests and urine tests may also indicate periodontal disease.

## Treatment and Home Care

Treatment for periodontal disease depends on the severity of the disease. Dental scaling and polishing by your veterinarian will remove plaque and calculus from the teeth and from periodontal pockets. Your pet will need to be anesthetized for dental scaling. Oftentimes, your veterinarian will need to remove gum tissue if the gum pockets surrounding the teeth are deep or if cauliflower-like growths are present. Loose teeth will usually be removed.

Home care is the more important part of therapy for periodontal disease. Frequent removal of plaque from your pet's teeth will help prevent periodontal disease and tooth loss. For tips about plaque removal at home, ask your veterinarian for a copy of the *Hill's Client Information Series* handout titled "reducing the Risks of Canine Periodontal Disease" or "Reducing the Risks of Feline Periodontal Disease."

Your veterinarian will probably schedule routine office visits to check your pet's teeth. These visits will allow him or her to help you combat periodontal disease through dental scalings and other necessary procedures designed to help your pet keep its teeth.

## Nutritional Plan

After your pet has been treated for periodontal disease, your veterinarian may suggest a dietary change. Optimal nutrition provides for a pet's need based on age and activity level, and reduces the health risks associated with feeding excess sodium, calcium, phosphorus, protein, and calories. Foods that avoid these harmful excesses and also reduce the tartar and plaque that contribute to gingivitis and bad breath include Hill's® Prescription Diet® Canine t/d® and Feline t/d®.

## Transitioning Food

Unless recommended otherwise by your veterinarian, gradually introduce any new food over a seven-day period. Mix the new food with your pet's former food, gradually increasing its proportion until only the new food is fed.

If your pet is one of the few that doesn't readily accept a new food, try warming the canned food to body temperature, hand feeding for the first few days, or mixing the dry food with warm water (wait ten minutes before serving). However, do not add water to your cat's food. Feed only the prescribed food. Do not feed additional salt or any snacks that may contain sodium. Be patient but firm with your pet. This is important because the success or failure of treatment depends to a large degree on strict adherence to the new food.

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## Home Care Instructions

Client's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Patient's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Medication(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Nutritional Recommendation: \_\_\_\_\_

Follow-Up Appointment: \_\_\_\_\_

(Hospital Stamp Area Above)

REGULAR VISITS WILL HELP OUR VETERINARY HEALTH CARE TEAM PROVIDE FOR YOUR PET'S BEST INTEREST.