

# WOODVALE PARK

## VETERINARY HOSPITAL



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# Periodontal Disease

## Basics

### OVERVIEW

- Inflammation of the tissues around and supporting the tooth; the tooth support structures include the gum tissue (known as “gingiva”); the cementum and periodontal ligament (the cementum and periodontal ligament attach the tooth to the bone); and the alveolar bone (the bone that surrounds the roots of the tooth); periodontitis (inflammation/infection of the tissues around and supporting the tooth) indicates some degree of periodontal attachment tissue loss (that is, some loss of the structures [cementum, periodontal ligament, alveolar bone] that attach the tooth to the bone)

### SIGNALMENT/DESCRIPTION OF PET

#### Species

- Dogs
- Cats (less common)

#### Mean Age and Range

- More common in older pets

### SIGNS/OBSERVED CHANGES IN THE PET

- Swelling of the gum tissue (known as “gingival tissue”)
- Bad breath (known as “halitosis”)
- Redness or fluid build-up (edema) of the gums
- Variable amounts of plaque (the thin, “sticky” film that builds up on the teeth; composed of bacteria, white-blood cells, food particles, and components of saliva) and tartar or calculus (mineralized plaque on the tooth surface)
- Gum surfaces bleed easily on contact (for example, during play or physical examination)
- Loose teeth, missing teeth, and exposure of roots of the teeth

### CAUSES

- Plaque bacteria (bacteria found in the thin, “sticky” film that builds up on the teeth)

### RISK FACTORS

- Toy breeds with crowded teeth
- Dogs that groom themselves—causes hair to be imbedded in the tissue around the teeth (known as the “gingival sulcus”)
- Other debilitating illnesses
- Poor nutritional status

# Treatment

## HEALTH CARE

- Professional cleaning
- Periodontal surgery
- The ultimate goal of periodontal therapy is to control plaque and prevent attachment loss; a willing pet and a client who can provide home care are important considerations in creating a treatment plan

## DIET

- Dry food or hard, biscuit-type foods are preferable to soft, sticky foods
- Dental diets, such as Hill's Prescription Diet t/d—specifically indicated to control plaque (the thin, “sticky” film that builds up on the teeth; composed of bacteria, white-blood cells, food particles, and components of saliva) and tartar or calculus (mineralized plaque on the tooth surface) in dogs and cats

## Medications

Medications presented in this section are intended to provide general information about possible treatment. The treatment for a particular condition may evolve as medical advances are made; therefore, the medications should not be considered as all inclusive.

- Antibiotics—clindamycin and amoxicillin/clavulanic acid are approved for periodontal disease
- Tetracycline

## Follow-Up Care

### PATIENT MONITORING

- The degree of periodontal disease determines recall interval; some pets are checked monthly, while others can be evaluated every 3–6 months

### PREVENTIONS AND AVOIDANCE

- Professional dental cleaning and home care are essential for prevention of periodontal disease
- Your pet's veterinarian will discuss home care and available products and will provide instructions for their use

### POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Loss of teeth; loss of bone structure in lower jaw (mandible), leading to shortened lower jaw; tongue protruding from mouth
- Generalized infection in the body
- Possible heart, liver and/or kidney disease

### EXPECTED COURSE AND PROGNOSIS

- The response of the individual pet and the expected course and prognosis are highly variable
- Early diagnosis and appropriate treatment can minimize the destructive effects of this disease

## Key Points

- Periodontal disease is the most common infectious disease in dogs and cats
- Periodontal disease can lead to infection in other areas of the body and may cause heart, liver, and or kidney disease
- Professional dental cleaning and home care are essential for prevention of periodontal disease
- Your pet's veterinarian will discuss home care and available products and will provide instructions for their use

# Notes

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